What Is Narratology?

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Edited by/Herausgegeben von
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# What Is Narratology?

## Questions and Answers Regarding the Status of a Theory

Edited by
Tom Kindt and Hans-Harald Müller

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# Preface

The question of what narratology is, the aims it pursues and the methods it should employ currently occupies scholars from many countries working in a whole range of disciplines. It was therefore an obvious first step for the Narratology Research Group at the University of Hamburg, established in April 2001, to focus on this question and make it the subject of an international symposium with a view to promoting communication within the group and consolidating its identity. The symposium took place in Hamburg from 23 to 25 May 2002. It reviewed the possible answers to the question, looking at the proper subject-matter of narratology, its tasks and theoretical foundations, and its relationship to neighbouring disciplines and subdisciplines in the various configurations of textual and cultural studies.

What makes the question "What is narratology?" so pressing? The problem lies not in a lack of plausible answers to the question, but precisely in the abundance of such answers. To show how this situation arose would be the task of the history of narratology, which still remains to be written. In schematic form, the story falls into three phases. The first phase, beginning in the mid-nineteenth century in Europe and the USA and characterized by the accumulation of professionalized knowledge about narrative, took its material from three main sources: the remnants of normative rhetoric and poetics, the practical knowledge of novelists and the observations of literary critics. Until the mid-twentieth century, scholars collected the professionalized knowledge from these three areas and organized it under a wide variety of headings and titles, although references to one another's work and the publication of research reports already indicated a degree of continuity in the basic definition of the field and the methods of description used.

However, it was only in its second phase that "narratology" became a distinct subdiscipline of textual studies, after the term first used in 1969 by Tzvetan Todorov in his *Grammaire du Décaméron* found wide international acceptance. Todorov's account of the aims and themes of narratology was heavily influenced by Russian and Czech Formalism and

tology was heavily influenced by Russian and Czech Formalism and structural linguistics. This was a common trait of French narrative theory: in the work of Barthes, Kristeva, Todorov and others, the "grammar" of narrative took on, for a number of years, the status of a magic formula. Subsequently, however, the "high structuralism" of these generative grammarians achieved far less international currency than the "low structuralism" of Gérard Genette, whose work was widely translated and adapted, in many new publications, to the academic cultures of other countries. Until well into the 1980s, the term narratology, when used by literary scholars, generally meant narratology à la Genette.

The third phase in the history of narratology, extending up to the present, has seen a tremendous expansion and diversification of the subdiscipline. This was a consequence of the transition from structuralism to poststructuralism, differing in impact from country to country. The narratological project of "high" structuralism was quickly forgotten, but interest in Genette's brand of narratology also waned. The conviction, fostered by poststructuralism, that the truth claims of science are bound to fail and that scientific ideas can be reduced to arbitrary "deep structures" grounded in narrative, led to the proliferation of a certain form of narratology which consisted of little more than variations on the term "emplotment" and was imported wholesale into disciplines such as theology, psychology, sociology, history and law. Under the influence, inter alia, of this "narrativist turn," textual scholars began to speak of the need for a new, non-structuralist narratology which would abandon its previous descriptive abstinence and evolve into a theory–or theories–of interpretation with some form of contextualist orientation (grounded, for example, in feminism, postcolonial or cultural studies). Thus, the concept of narratology was extended and placed in the service of aims that were incompatible with structuralist notions. In the process, its identity was blurred almost to the point of invisibility, and the question "What is narratology?" became inescapable.

A brief survey of the history of narratology cannot answer that question, but it can at least indicate the difficulties entailed in the search for an answer. The awareness of these difficulties is probably also the reason why none of the contributors to the present volume has tried to answer the question in the simplistic manner that continued to typify the programmatic statements of the 1990s, calling for a "new" narratology. Instead, they have cautiously attempted to define the concept in terms that are not only directed towards the desirable future of narratology as a whole or a

particular version thereof, but are also shaped by the structuralist history of narrative theory. The arguments supporting most definitions of narratology come from a wide variety of areas, but follow two typical patterns. One type of argument endeavours to derive the concept from its referent by first trying to define what narrative is and then saying what a corresponding theory should look like. The other type argues in terms of ends and purposes by trying to determine what functions narratology should serve in the theoretical configurations of the humanities.

Thus, the present volume does not provide a definitive answer to the question of what narratology is, but does make it clear that any answer has to be justified against a complex theoretical and historical background and has to meet certain adequacy criteria.

We would like to thank Alastair Matthews, John Ormrod and Patrick Gallagher for the translation of German contributions. Alastair Matthews is responsible for the English version of the articles by Fotis Jannidis, Andreas Kablitz and Michael Titzmann. Furthermore, he prepared the current version of the texts by Jens Eder, Anja Cornils / Wilhelm Schernus and Wolf Schmid, using Patrick Gallagher's draft translation as a basis. John Ormrod translated our own contribution. Our thanks also go to Oliver Krug, who prepared the layout and took on the responsibility of compiling the volume.

Hamburg Tom Kindt and Hans-Harald Müller

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GERALD PRINCE
(Philadelphia)

# Surveying Narratology

When I accepted to participate in the "What is Narratology?" colloquium, I decided to survey narratology: not merely because I had already reviewed, remodeled, and revisited it a number of times[1]; and not only to follow at least some of the lines drawn by the organizers[2]; but mainly because surveying involves the examination of boundaries and because, from the beginning, the question of boundaries has played a significant role in narratology.

Since narratology is the science of narrative[3] (or a theory of narrative), its very scope depends on the definition of the latter. It is, as a famous article by Gérard Genette indicates[4], contingent upon the boundaries of narrative, upon distinctions between narrative and non-narrative, or between both and antinarrative, or even between narrative as entity and narrative as quality. As we know, nothing like a consensus has been reached on that subject. Some theorists and researchers believe that everything is narrative; others maintain that everything can be; and still others contend that, in a sense, nothing is (because narrativity is culture-dependent and context-bound). Some define narrative as a verbal recounting of one or more events and others as any kind of event representation (including non-

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1 See, e.g., Prince (1992a), (1992b), (1999).

2 Among their initial queries: "what kind of theory should narratology be?" and "how extensive is the field which narratology should cover?"

3 Tzvetan Todorov, who coined the term in *Grammaire du Décaméron* defined it as "la science du récit" (Todorov 1969: 10).

4 Genette (1976).

verbal ones). Some argue that it involves consecution, consequence, and even closure, that it must be populated with anthropomorphic individuals, that it must be anchored in everyday human experience; others do not agree with all, many, or any of these specifications[5]. I myself have wavered but more on that later.

Even if a consensus were reached and everyone agreed on a definition of narrative (for narratological purposes), another set of boundaries—the boundaries of narratology, as a well-known piece by Michel Mathieu-Colas once put it[6]—would have to be determined. The definition of the discipline (or perhaps "undiscipline") varies widely depending on whether one believes in "getting it all in" or getting it all out, "only connecting" or always disconnecting, always historicizing or only abstracting, theory or science, expansiveness or restraint. There are formalist considerations of narrative but also dialogical and phenomenological ones; there are Aristotelian approaches to it as well as tropological or deconstructive ones; there are cognitivist and constructivist accounts of it, historical, sociological, and anthropological views, feminist takes, queer speculations, and political ones[7]. As suggested by the increasingly frequent recourse to hyphenated and modified expressions (structuralist narratology, postclassical narratology, socionarratology, psychonarratology) or by the adoption of a plural (I am thinking of the title of Ansgar Nünning's paper and of that of the recent collection edited by David Herman)[8], it is not evident to everyone that the remarkable variety of discourses pertaining to narrative could or should be coherently subsumed by narratology. In 1966, Roland Barthes would probably not have thought so. The narrational level, he argued in one of the foundational texts of the discipline, should be the last one to be addressed by the structural analysis of narrative:

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5 See, e.g., Adam (1984), (1985); Bal (1985); Bremond (1973); Coste (1989); Fludernik (1996); Genette (1980), (1988); Greimas (1983), (1970); Herman (2002); Prince (1987); Ricœur (1984); Richardson (2000); Ryan (1992).

6 Mathieu-Colas (1986).

7 See, e.g., Herman (1997); Lanser (1992), (1986); O'Neill (1994); the three numbers of *Poetics Today* revisiting narratology: 11.2 (1990), 11.4 (1990), and 12.3 (1991); the recent special number of *Style* edited by Brian Richardson: 34.2 (2000); and the recent special number of *Narrative* edited by Emma Kafalenos: 9.2 (2001).

8 Nünning "Narratology or Narratologies?" (this volume); Herman, ed. (1999).

> beyond the narrational level begins the external world, that is to say other systems (social, economic, ideological) which no longer include narratives only, but elements of another substance (historical facts, determinations, behaviors, etc.) [...] [F]rom that point on, it is necessary to resort to another semiotics[9].

Tzvetan Todorov, when he emphasized that the object of the "science" he named narratology "is constituted by actions such as a certain discourse, called narrative, organizes them," and Nilli Diengott, who forcefully distinguished narratology as theoretical narrative poetics from "other fields within the study of literature, such as interpretation, historical poetics, or criticism," would also endorse a restrictive view of the field[10]. But Didier Coste, Thomas Leitch, or Susan Lanser (who stated that narratology ought to "study narrative in relation to a referential context that is simultaneously linguistic, literary, historical, biographical, social, and political") would support an altogether different view[11]. As for me, I often side with the former (restrictive) group, but more on that later.

Once again, even if a consensus were reached, still another set of boundaries may have to be established. After all, whether it is expansive or restrictive, narratology presumably studies what is relevant to narrative. Unless nothing in narrative texts and their contexts (from the motion of electrons to that of the stars) is alien to them and if only for practical reasons, narratology has to pose the question of narrative (and narratological!) relevance. Now, a number of criteria can be invoked regarding the latter but none has proven unassailable. Perhaps, as I have already argued in a different context[12], the most commonly sanctioned one is the distinctiveness criterion. Narratology is concerned (significantly if not exclusively) with the *differentia specifica* of narrative, what in narrative is distinctive of narrative. There is a lot more than narrative in narrative (comic power, colorful images, psychological insight) and narratology aspires (among other things) to account for narrative *qua* narrative (in its narrativity): it attempts to characterize all and only possible narrative texts to the extent that they are narrative (that they exhibit features specific to narrative). Thus, if narrative is defined as the representation of events or changes in states of affairs (and non-narrative is not), certain temporal relations, say, would be narrative-specific whereas comic power or psycho-

9 Barthes (1975: 264–65).
10 Todorov (1969: 10).
11 Coste (1989); Leitch (1986); Lanser (1986).
12 Prince (1995: 76–77).

logical insight would not (given the definition and since there are many—far too many!—narratives that exhibit neither and numerous non-narratives that exhibit both). But if comic power or psychological insight does not constitute a *differentia specifica* of narrative, the same can be said of character (think of Theophrastus and La Bruyère), of description (which occurs outside narrative), or even of point of view (since any entity or situation, in or out of narrative, can be considered in different manners, with different attitudes, from different positions). Yet these three categories—especially the last one—have attracted a great deal of attention from narratologists (and often not in their specifically *narrative* functioning). In other words, the distinctiveness criterion is not determinative.

Nor is the integrality criterion. Narratologists pay much more attention to a narrator's diegetic situation or degree of covertness, for instance, than to a narrator's weight or age presumably because every narrator can be described as extra- or intra-, homo- or heterodiegetic and every narrator can be described as more or less overt or covert but not every narrator can be characterized in terms of age or heaviness (what is the narrator's weight in "Hills Like White Elephants," "Sally ate before she drank," or "Peter rode off into the sunset after mounting his horse"? More generally, if narrative features and narratological accounts constitute and designate a narrating entity, must that entity have a weight or age?). However, narratologists pay considerable attention to narrative space, say, though it is quite possible to narrate without referring to the space of the story, the space of the narrating instance, or the relations between them: consider "Mary spoke to Irma before she spoke to Joan."

Other criteria prove just as problematic. Simplicity, for example, is not only a function of the measures selected (number of elements used in the model proposed, number of rules for combining these elements, diversity of the elements or the rules) but also a function of the results yielded (what if they are inconclusive or (technically) uninteresting?); and elegance—another frequently invoked criterion—should be left to the designer.

In the end, maybe the most consistently applied and applicable criterion is that of productivity. The inclusion of a category like narrative space in narratological models was at least partly motivated and vindicated by its traditional and continued importance in "adequate" accounts of narrative possibilities as well as by its capacity to be linked with other (traditionally) important categories in such accounts (narrative speed, for example, or narrative frequency). Which leads me to say now (though I

will come back to it later) that, in principle, no textual (or contextual) feature of narrative should be considered narratologically irrelevant unless it proves unproductive (or suffers from similarly afflictive conditions).

Of course, even when some kind of accord obtains about the set of features or categories that are narratologically relevant (or any proper subset thereof), their boundaries are often controversial because their domains are open to dispute. Arguments about point of view or focalization, for instance, have not disappeared; the (narratological) situation of a category like ellipsis is certainly debatable (should it be classified under narrative speed or narrative frequency?); and even as seemingly stable a figure as the narrator is not immune from revisionism. After considering the functions implied by an act of narration, Marie-Laure Ryan recently concluded that narratorhood is a matter of degree. The narrator is not a theoretical primitive. Its mode of existence depends on the number of narratorial functions it fulfills (and its theoretical correlate, the narratee, has a correspondingly variable ontological status)[13].

The frequent redrawing of some boundaries and the contesting of others, the redefinition of certain domains and the reclassification of certain features as well as other kinds of controversy are clearly not specific to narratology (or any particular branch of knowledge) though they may be more commonly found in immature and underdeveloped fields. Nor are they necessarily symptoms of trouble or disarray. They can even constitute signs of vitality, vigor, and the adventurousness that often leads to discovery. But they can also bring about a dizzying proliferation of terminology (and dictionaries!); they can mean repeated starts from scratch and concomitant wastes of effort; and—what's probably even worse—they can lead to adhocity and incoherence. In fact, the rigor of certain constraints, the precision of certain distinctions, the stability of certain boundaries are no less crucial to the health and energy of a field and, in what follows, I will, once again, make certain discriminations and propose certain definitions that I believe important to the development of narratology.

First things first. Not everything is (a) narrative and not every representation is. For an entity to be a narrative, it must be analyzable as the representation of one (or more than one non-randomly connected, non-simultaneous, and non-contradictory) transformation of one (or more than

[13] Ryan (2001). On point of view and focalization, see van Peer/Chatman (2001).

one) state of affairs, one (or more than one) event which is not logically presupposed by the transformed state and/or does not logically entail its transform. However cumbersome, this definition, which is at once flexible and limiting, has, I think, several virtues (beside agreeing or at least not conflicting with commonly held views about the nature of narrative). For example, it allows for a distinction between narrative and non-narrative (a single linguistic sign, say, or the repetition of the same sign, a series of nonsensical syllables, a purely phatic utterance, a simple existential statement, but also the mere description of an action like "John opened the window" or "Mary closed the door," a syllogism, an argument, and so on and so forth). The definition also allows for distinguishing between narrative and antinarrative (e.g. Robbe-Grillet's *La Jalousie*) by assigning cohesion, consistency, and even closure to narrative representations. Most generally, perhaps, and to use Emile Benveniste's terms, the definition evokes the *semantic* rather than *semiotic* nature and mode of signification of narrative entities: unlike a sign, a narrative is not *recognized* but *understood* (which, no doubt, helps to explain the differences of opinion regarding the narrative status of many entities)[14].

If the definition points to a number of boundaries and makes a number of conditions or restrictions explicit, it also makes room for a considerable amount of diversity. For instance, it does not specify the medium of narrative representations: oral, written, or sign language, still or moving pictures, gestures, or a combination thereof. Nor does it specify their truth or falsehood, their factuality or fictionality, their traditionalism or modernity, their ordinariness or literariness, their spontaneity or deliberateness. Nor does it detail the nature of their content and its relation to anthropomorphic experience, the kind of topics addressed and themes developed, the sort of situations and events represented or the nature of their many possible links. Furthermore, it puts no limits on the potential magnitude of narratives; it barely indicates the degree of cohesion or the kind of closure they (ought to) possess; and it hardly constrains modes of narration (different ways of representing the same situations and events) or modes of narrativity (what Marie-Laure Ryan describes as "the various textual realizations of plots, the various ways in which a text relies on a narrative

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[14] Benveniste (1974).

structure (or plot, or story) and suggests this structure as a model of coherence"[15]).

Narratology should make explicit those definitional boundaries of narrative and it should account for those *narrative* diversities. As a matter of fact, it partly does. In the area of the narrating, for example, narratologists have described the temporal orders that a narrative can follow, the anachronies that it can exhibit, the achronic structures that it can accommodate. Moreover, they have characterized narrative speed and its canonical tempos. They have investigated narrative frequency, examined narrative distance and narrative point of view, studied the types of discourse that a text can adopt to present the utterances and thoughts of characters, and analyzed the major kinds of narration (posterior, anterior, simultaneous, intercalated) as well as their modes of combination. They have also explored the distinctive features of first-, second-, and third-person narrative. Finally, they have specified (some of) the signs referring to the narrator (who may be more or less overt, knowledgeable, reliable, self-conscious, etc.) and to the narratee, and they have delineated (some of) the respective functions of these two actants of communication, the possible distances between them— temporal, linguistic, moral, intellectual, etc.—as well as the possible distances separating them from the situations, events, and characters in the world represented.

The investigation of that world has likewise yielded notable results. For instance, students of narrative have examined the minimal constituents of the narrated (existents and events, goal-directed actions and mere happenings, states and processes) and they have distinguished those constituents essential to the causal and chronological coherence of the story from those not essential to it. They have studied many of the possible relations (syntagmatic and paradigmatic, spatiotemporal, logical, functional, transformational) between the minimal units and they have demonstrated that narrative sequences consisting of a series of minimal constituents the last one of which in time is a (partial) transformation of the first can be combined into more complex sequences through such operations as conjunction, embedding, and alternation. Moreover, they have explored the nature of the participants in the narrated situations and events as well as the settings in which the latter take place. Characters, for example, can be more or less textually prominent, dynamic or static, consistent or incon-

[15] Ryan (1992: 369).

sistent, unidimensional or multidimensional, and their attributes can be explicitly, contiguously, and reliably stated or not. As for settings, they too can be textually important or negligible, stable or unstable, consistent or inconsistent, and their constitutive features can be presented by the narrator or through a character, adjacently or discontinuously, in an orderly fashion (from left to right, top to bottom, inside to outside) or in a disorderly one[16].

The isolation and characterization of those aspects of the narrating and the narrated I have just evoked (or of many others still, pertaining, for example, to the nature and autonomy of the worlds constituting narrative universes or to some of the factors affecting narrativeness and its kinds) do not involve any specification of narrative context[17]. This does not mean, of course, that such specification is uninteresting or useless. No more than it means that the constitution and the description (not to mention the interpretation) of a particular narrative are not affected by the (many) contexts of its production or reception. Even relatively restrictive narratologists (read: Gerald Prince) are well aware that—as Wayne Booth once emphasized and as Tamar Yacobi recently stressed again—the very same forms can have very diverse effects[18]. They know, for instance, that the same passage can sometimes function as iterative or singulative narration, as free indirect or narratized discourse, as featuring coordination or subordination, as involving consecutiveness or consequence. They also realize not only that such narrative factors and ingredients as the plausibility of situations and events, the dynamics of suspense, curiosity, and surprise, or the reliability of the narrator are a function of context but that even such a core narratological category as narrative speed (with its canonical tempos) can be said to be "fuzzy" or "relative" as opposed to "precise" or "absolute" and that its exploitation in the analysis of specific narratives often varies with the analyst[19]. Indeed, and most generally, they do consider relevant to their investigations the study of narratives in contexts uniquely applicable to them or to a limited corpus of which they are part. They have themselves explored such generically, culturally, or spatiotemporally circumscribed corpora (think of Tzvetan Todorov's work

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[16] See, e.g., Abbott (2002); Bal (1985); Chatman (1978); Genette (1980), (1988); Hamon (1981), (1983); Martin (1986); Prince (1982); Todorov (1981).

[17] See, e.g., Dolezel (1976); Pavel (1980); Ryan (1991).

[18] Yacobi (2001).

[19] See Prince (1990: 275–76).

on the fantastic[20]) and they understand that the exploration of even a single text in a particular context can throw new light on narrative and its functioning. But since these investigations of limited corpora and specific contexts depend on an already constituted (though provisional) set of statements pertaining to all and only possible narratives, since they combine the interests of a number of fields, and since, whatever their consequences may be, their aims are particular rather than general, local rather than global, restrictive narratologists may be inclined to view them as lying outside of narratology proper. Just as many linguists would distinguish core areas of linguistics (syntax, semantics, phonology) from areas dependent on them (psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, pragmatics) and would further distinguish both sets of areas from the philosophy of language or from the linguistically-oriented criticism of literary texts, restrictive narratologists tend to discriminate between narratology, narratological criticism. and such (actual or potential) fields as psychonarratology, socionarratology, historical narratoloy, or philosophy of narrative.

Similar remarks apply to text-internal studies of specific (sets of) narratives. Some of them—the study of the tragic vision of André Malraux's fiction, for example, or that of the comic dimension of David Lodge's novels—would, I think, be judged narratologically irrelevant by restrictive and expansive narratologists alike. The same could be said, more generally, of the characterization of a text's ideology, the interpretation of its meaning, the description of its style (or particular use of one medium or another), the evaluation of its beauty. Unless, of course, those studies happened to exploit as points of departure, articulation, or reference certain narrative features (focalization, say, or frequency). In that case, restrictive narratologists would draw different boundaries than those their more expansive colleagues might devise. Again, they certainly know that the examination of a single text (establishing its narrative specificity, say, or using narratological description to found or support certain interpretive conclusions) can test the validity and rigor of narratological categories, identify (more or less significant) elements that narratologists (may) have overlooked, underestimated, or misunderstood, and possibly lead to basic reformulations of models of narrative. In fact they have often undertaken such examinations (I myself have studied the role of the narrator in Bal-

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[20] Todorov (1973).

zac's *Père Goriot*, that of the narratee in Mauriac's *Vipers' Tangle*, the function of metanarrative signs in Breton's *Nadja*, the nature of attributive discourse in *Madame Bovary*)[21]. Yet, to those who value comprehensiveness and systematicity in their investigation of narrative and who consider, for instance, that narratology should characterize the way narratives mean (narratively) rather than characterizing their meanings or, to put it in other words, that it should account for narrative understanding rather than present understandings of particular narratives, text-internal and punctual studies fall in the domain of narratological criticism (or of applied narratology).

I believe that such surveyings of narratology's borders and such restrictions on its proper domain are valuable since they promote—against adhocity—methodicalness and generality, since they help to provide a well-defined object of study and well-defined (ultimate) goals for the discipline (to describe what all and only possible narratives have in common narratively as well as what enables them to to be narratively different from one another and to characterize narrative competence), and since they resist the (unreflective) conflation of the theoretical, the descriptive, and the interpretive (or what I sometimes call the "interesting"). But I do not think that they are as important as other narratological endeavors. In the end, whether we view narratology as a theoretical poetics or also as a descriptive and historical one, as a kind of criticism, as a mode of interpretation, and whether we designate this or that study as properly narratological or not will surely matter less than the capacity of those studies to illuminate the nature, form, or functioning of narrative and than any number of tasks that narratologists are pursuing or should undertake. To conclude my surveying, I would like briefly to mention and discuss at least some of those tasks.

The first one is evident enough. It consists (with the help of new tools and expanded corpora) in identifying, examining, or reexamining various aspects of narrative in order to define or redefine them, reconfigure them, reorder them, and eliminate possible incoherences among them. I mentioned earlier Marie-Laure Ryan's revisionist view of the narrator (and the narratee); I could have mentioned other efforts at breaking down theoretical primitives, like Dorrit Cohn's reanalysis of "unreliable" into "mis-

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[21] Prince (1976a), (1976b), (1980a), (2000).

informed" and "discordant" narration[22]. I also referred to the very considerable work that continues to be done on point of view; but I could have just as pertinently mentioned the reexplorations and redefinitions of figures like the implied author[23]. And I could have evoked the proposal of Daniel Punday for a corporeal narratology, the work of Jon-K. Adams on narrative order; that of John Pier on the space of the narrative text; Marie-Laure Ryan, and Uri Margolin on virtuality; Brian McHale, Brian Richardson, and Françoise Revaz on narrativeness or narrativity; David Herman on story logic, Manfred Jahn on frames, Emma Kafalenos on fabula, Dorrit Cohn on the distinction of fiction and Philippe Carrard on that of history; and so on and so forth[24]. Most generally, I could have noted in much recent narratological work the increased affection for distinguishing narrative features or configurations in terms of continuums rather than strict binaries (or ternaries) and, even more striking, the increased concern for incorporating a "voice of the receiver" in narratological accounts of textual functioning[25].

Now, making room for a receiver's voice—for instance through pointing to textual ambiguities resolvable by particular receivers in particular circumstances: does this passage feature iterative or singulative narration? does that one involve coordination or subordination?—making room for a receiver's voice will not put an end to a vast set of questions concerning the role and significance of any number of narrative features. Why readers weight the latter differently, whether they are sensitive to switches in distance or point of view, how they construct different kinds of implied author, when they opt for one interpretation as opposed to another, and what leads them to distinguish different kinds of narrativeness are empirical problems requiring empirically based answers. Yet narratologists—classical or postclassical, restrictive or expansive—have done little extensive empirical or experimental (crosscultural or cross media) exploration of these or similar problems and I think that we have too often been inclined to take locally suggestive and persuasive arguments about understandings and responses for generally true statements. No doubt, that type

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22 Cohn (2000).
23 See, e.g., Nünning (1997), (1999).
24 Punday (2000); Adams (1999); Pier (1999); Ryan (1991); Margolin (1999); McHale (2001); Richardson (2001); Revaz (1997); Herman (2002); Kafalenos (2000); Cohn (1999); Carrard (2002).
25 See the special number of *Narrative* edited by Emma Kafalenos: 9.2 (2001).

of exploration itself presents a number of difficulties. It is not easy to find (or devise laboratory) specimens free of the crippling disease of clumsiness nor is it easy to design protocols for a sound assessment of processing strategies and interpretive responses. Still, following the example of Peter Dixon and Marisa Bortolussi, Willie van Peer and Henk Pander Maat, Els Andringa, or Richard Gerrig[26], we should attempt to ground narratology empirically in order to account for what actually is the case.

Theory must engage reality; the description must meet the phenomenon; the model must correspond to the modeled. The elaboration of an explicit, complete, and empirically grounded model of narrative accounting for narrative competence (the ability to produce narratives and to process texts as narratives) ultimately constitutes the most significant narratological endeavor. After a number of (early) intoxicating proposals—from Todorov, Greimas, van Dijk, Pavel, and others[27]—the modeling impulse appears to have abated. But it seems to me that, whatever form such a model takes (that of a generative-transformational grammar, say, or that of a graph-based topology), its development will not only promote the coherence of the discipline but also facilitate the systematic study of its object.

[26] Dixon/Bortolussi (2001); van Peer/Maat (1996); Andringa (1996); Gerrig (1993).
[27] Todorov (1969); Greimas (1971); van Dijk (1972); Pavel (1985); Prince (1973), (1980b).

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# Narrativity and Eventfulness

## 1. What Can or Should it Mean to Be Narrative?

Two distinct concepts of narrativity can be identified in the study of literature. The first became established in classical narrative theory, particularly the work of German critics, long before the term "narratology" was introduced to describe it. In this earlier tradition, a text qualified as a narrative if it contained specific communicative characteristics. Narration was bound to the presence of a mediating authority, the narrator, and contrasted with the direct presentation of events in the drama. The existence of such a mediator between the author and the narrated world was the defining feature of narrativity in classical narrative theory. Narration, it was felt, is rooted in the way that the narrator refracts narrated reality like a prism. This paradigm provides the background for the argument of Käte Friedemann (1910), student of Oskar Walzel and the founder of classical German narrative theory, when she compares the immediate presentation of reality in the drama with the mediation that takes place in the narrative:

> "Wirklich" im dramatischen Sinne ist ein Vorgang, der eben jetzt geschieht, von dem wir Zeuge sind und dessen Entwicklung in die Zukunft wir mitmachen. "Wirklich" im epischen Sinne aber ist zunächst überhaupt nicht der erzählte Vorgang, sondern das Erzählen selbst. (Friedemann 1910: 25)

With these words, Friedemann openly distances herself from the views of Friedrich Spielhagen (1883, 1898). In the name of the quest for objectivity, he demands that epic authors renounce the use of the inherently subjective narrating authority:

> [Der Erzähler] symbolisiert die uns seit Kant geläufige erkenntnistheoretische Auffassung, daß wir die Welt nicht ergreifen, wie sie an sich ist, sondern wie sie durch das Medium eines betrachtenden Geistes hindurchgegangen. (Friedemann 1910: 26)

Many theories of the more recent past have continued to describe the distinctive nature of narration in terms of a mediation process. Franz Stanzel, for example, begins his *Theory of Narration* (Stanzel 1979), in which he summarizes his earlier works (Stanzel 1955, 1964) against the background of new theoretical horizons, by reaffirming mediacy (*Mittelbarkeit*) as the defining characteristic of narrative texts. He thereby renews the status of a property that he had previously invoked as the indispensable defining feature of narration in the introduction to his *Typical Narrative Situations* (Stanzel 1964).

The second concept of narrativity was developed in the structuralist study of narrative, for which Tzvetan Todorov (1969) coined the term "narratology." In structuralism, the defining characteristic of narration is not a feature of discourse or communication but rather a feature of what is narrated. Texts which we describe as narrative in the structuralist sense of the word contrast with descriptive texts in that they contain a temporal structure and represent changes of state.

The classical concept restricts narrativity to the domain of verbal communication, covering only those works that contain a narrating authority, or mediator, including purely descriptive sketches and travel reports, while excluding all lyric, dramatic, and cinematic texts. The structuralist concept, on the other hand, can apply to a representation in any medium but excludes representations whose referents do not have a temporal structure and consequently do not contain any changes of state. It might seem as if we have to choose one concept or the other, but practical experience with real texts makes clear that, in fact, neither is completely satisfactory—the two concepts are either counterintuitive or insufficiently differentiated. As a result of these shortcomings, a mixed concept has emerged in practical literary theory, and it is this hybrid notion that the present essay is intended to describe and systematize. In doing so, we shall not address the question of what "narrative" means; instead, we shall discuss, by suggesting how best to approach it, the related question of what "narrative" can or should sensibly be taken to mean.

To begin with, let us note that the concept of narrative has two basic meanings, one broad and one narrow. They can be terminologically distinguished at a later stage.

From the structuralist perspective, the broader concept of narrative refers to representations that contain a change of state (or of situation). In the context of this definition, a state is to be understood as a set of properties which refer to an agent or to the setting at a particular point in time. We can distinguish internal and external states on the basis of whether the represented features are linked to the inner life of the agent or to elements of setting. (A state can, of course, be a combination of features of setting and internal properties of an agent.) If a change of state is brought about by an agent, we speak of an action. If it affects a patient, we have a happening (Chatman 1978: 32; Prince 1987: 39).

The minimal condition of narrativity is that at least one change of state must be represented. The single change of state that constitutes narrativity implies at least the following: (1) a temporal structure with at least two states, the initial situation and the final situation; and (2) the equivalence of the initial and final situations, that is, the presence of a similarity and a contrast between the states, or, more precisely, the identity and difference of the properties of those states. (Complete identity of the properties would mean that there would not be a change of state at all, while absolute difference would prevent a change of state from occurring because the situations at the beginning and end of a change must be comparable by having something in common—if they do not, there is no thing whose state can change.)

There is, however, at least one further requirement of narrativity: both states, and the change that takes place between them, must be related to one and the same acting or suffering subject or one and the same element of setting[1].

Some theorists have gone a step further and postulated that, in addition to the relationship of temporal sequentiality, there is also some kind of motivational relationship between the states or situations. One of the earliest of these theorists is Boris Tomashevsky (1925: 136; 1985: 215), who contrasts narrative works with descriptive works and calls the former "works with a fable" ("fabul'nye proizvedeniya"); he stipulates that they

[1] Wolf-Dieter Stempel (1973) identifies the following set of requirements for the minimal narrative sequence: the subject affected by the transformation must be identical; the contents of the narrative statement must be compatible; there must be a contrast between the predicates; and the facts must stand in chronological order. Prince (1973) posits a different catalog of requirements for narrativity, which is itself reformulated by Titzmann (1992), (2003).

must be bound together by temporal and causal connections. The requirement that there must be more than just a temporal connection between the states has been repeatedly proposed in a number different guises. But, nonetheless, the minimal definition of narrativity can and should be formulated in such as way that it does not require the presence of an additional (e.g. causal) connection between the states. After all, only rarely do literary texts contain an explicitly expressed causality. For the most part, the cause of a change of state is open and must be determined or "concretized" (Ingarden 1930) by the reader. Even if the reader of a story encounters a passage that is so explicit that it can only be read in a single, unambiguous manner, it is still the case that the reader must interpret it in order for the relations of cause and effect to be conretized. In many works, moreover, there are actually a number of very different possible explanations for a single change of state[2]. We must therefore conclude that the minimal definition of narrativity need not include causality or other motivations for changes of state.

The Hamburg Narratology Research Group has discussed the question of whether the category of point of view, or perspective, should be included in the definition of narrativity; I believe that it should not. The presence of an implicit perspective is not unique to narration but is really a property of all modes of representation. Any representation of reality presupposes the selection, naming, and evaluation of certain elements of the events that take place; and this inherently entails the presence of perspective. In other words, every representation of reality has its own particular perceptual, spatial, temporal, axiomatic, and linguistic point of view[3].

Many, but by no means all structuralist definitions concur in stating that narrative texts in the broader sense described above narrate a story[4].

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2 Ambiguous motivation which underlies an action and the causality of events should not be misinterpreted as a property unique to post-realistic poetics. In Alexander Pushkin's pre-realist prose, above all in the *Tales of Belkin* ("Povesti Belkina," 1830), the reasons behind what the heroes do are enigmatic and can be read in any number of ways; see Schmid (1981).

3 See Schmid (2003: 109–44) on my conception of point of view and the distinction between five levels at which perspective functions.

4 See, for example, Gérard Genette, who writes that "le récit, le discours narratif ne peut être tel qu'en tant qu'il raconte une histoire, faute de quoi il ne serait narratif" (Genette 1972: 74). Genette relates the classic characteristic of narrative, "qu'il est proféré par

"Story" itself has a variety of meanings—Prince's *Dictionary of Narratology* (Prince 1987) distinguishes five definitions of the concept. For our purposes, we shall take story as referring to the content of narrative (as opposed to that of discourse). What is the relationship between story and change of state? How many changes of state are needed to make a story? The difference between change of state and story is not a quantitative one—a story can consist of a single change of state. Instead, the difference between them lies in their extensions—the changes of state form a subset of the story. As well as represented changes of state, which are dynamic elements, a story includes static elements, which are the states or situations themselves, the settings and the agents or patients within them. Thus, by necessity, the presentation of a story combines narrative and descriptive modes.

Descriptive texts are the opposite of texts which are narrative in the broader sense that we have discussed above. Descriptive texts represent static situations: they describe conditions, draw pictures or portraits, portray social milieus, or categorize natural and social phenomena. They represent a single moment in time and a single state of affairs. Description is also found in texts which represent more than one state of affairs if those states of affairs lack the double bond of similarity and contrast or are not connected to a single identical agent or element of setting.

Despite the clear theoretical contrast between the methods of the narrative and the descriptive text, the boundaries between them are fluid, and deciding the category of a given text is often a matter of interpretation. As I have shown above, a descriptive component is necessarily present in all narration—it is impossible to represent the initial and final states of a change without employing a certain amount of description. Conversely, any description can employ narrative means in order to foreground particular aspects of a situation. Thus, whether a text is descriptive or narrative in nature depends not on the quantity of the static or dynamic segments in it but on the function which they have in the overall context of the work. This functionality can assume a distinctly hybrid character. For most texts, the nearest we can get to a definitive classification is identifying the dominance of one of the two modes, which itself is a matter of interpretation. When a text includes no more than the description of, say,

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qu'elqu'un," to discourse alone: "Comme narratif, il vit de son rapport à l'histoire qu'il raconte; comme discours, il vit de son rapport à la narration qui le profère."

two situations, it can be interpreted equally well as descriptive or narrative. (The latter, of course, presupposes that there is an equivalence between the two situations.) The reader who treats such a text as a narrative will focus on difference, that which is inconstant in the elements of the text, and thereby read a change of states into it. Conversely, the reader who understands the text as a description will treat the differences between the situations as differences between equally representative views of one and the same phenomenon and concentrate on that which the different elements have in common.

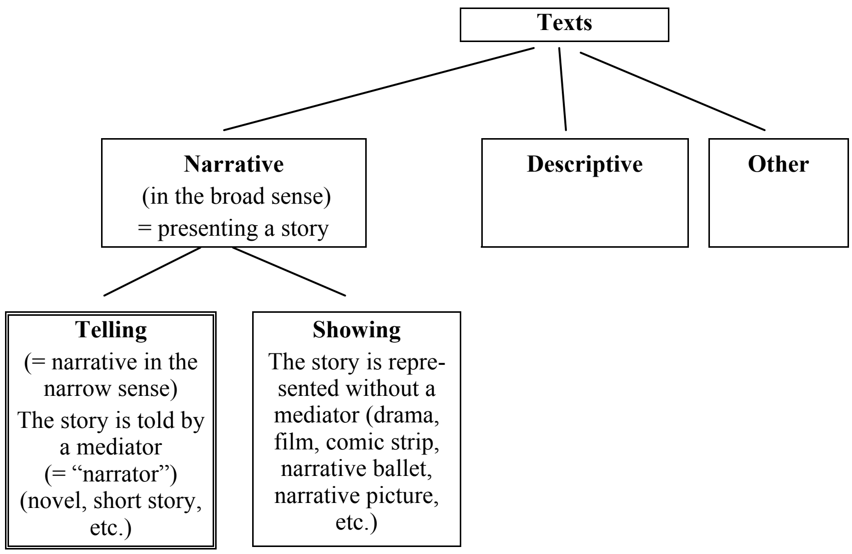
Tomashevsky includes works of travel writing in the class of descriptive texts "when they narrate only that which is seen and not the personal adventures of the traveler" (Tomashevsky 1925: 136). However, a description of travel can become a narrative without explicitly thematizing the traveler's internal state; this can happen when a transformation inside the seeing figure becomes apparent from the selection of what is seen. In such cases, it is clear that we are dealing with an implicit narrative structure in which the different states and the change in the seeing subject which can explain them are indirectly suggested by indices or symptoms in the description.

In general, we can assume that a tendency towards narrativity develops in descriptive texts if and when a describing authority makes itself apparent in them. Certainly, the resultant narrativity is related not to what is described but rather to the presence that describes and the way in which it does so. The changes that take place in this case are related to discourse rather than to the described world; they are changes in the consciousness of the describing authority and constitute a story located at the level of discourse, a "discourse story" ("Erzählgeschichte," Schmid 1982).

I propose that a text is narrative in the narrower sense of the word if it both denotes a story and, implicitly or explicitly, represents the narrating authority (narrator) behind that same story. This narrower definition immediately excludes the subset of showing texts which are covered by the broader definition. They are texts that represent a transformation without the mediation of a narrator—dramas, films, comic strips, ballets, pantomimes, narrative paintings, and so on. (There are, of course, other kinds of non-narrative text in addition to descriptive texts.)

The least complicated terminological way to represent our findings is to refer to narrative in the broader sense simply as "narrative", while narrative in the narrower sense can sensibly be referred to with the narrator-related term "(story-)telling" (German *erzählend*, Russian *povestvovatel'-*

*nyj*). This results in the following typology (the remaining text types are not further differentiated)[5]




## 2. Events and Eventfulness

Literary theory must do more than just register the presence of changes of state. Even the shortest of stories, not to speak of novels on the scale of Tolstoy's *War and Peace*, will represent a vast number of changes. Nor is it enough to distinguish various types of change such as natural, actional, interactional, and mental ones (the categories proposed in Dolezel 1978). Instead, we require categories which will allow us to distinguish between

[5] This classification is a modification of Seymour Chatman's well-known model (Chatman 1990: 115), in which narrative texts are subdivided into diegetic texts, which recount their events with narratorial mediation, and mimetic texts, which enact their events without mediation. The words "diegetic" and "mimetic" are meant here in the sense used by Plato, whose *Republic* distinguishes between diegesis (= pure narration) and mimesis (= imitation of the characters' discourse).

the countless natural, actional, and mental changes—from thunderclap to victory in battle to a hero's psychological turning point—that take place in a narrated world and organize them in a hierarchical arrangement according to their actionality, their relevance, and the scope of their consequences.

I suggest, therefore, that we should employ a concept that has enjoyed widespread use in literary theory: the event (German *Ereignis*, Russian *sobytie*). In all three languages, English, German, and Russian, an event is a special occurrence, something which is not part of everyday routine. We shall highlight the importance of exceptionality in our strict interpretation of the event concept: every event is a change of state, but not every change of state constitutes an event. The event, therefore, has to be defined as a change of state that fulfills certain conditions.

The first basic requirement of the event, I propose, is that its associated change of state must be *factual, or real* (real, that is, in the framework of the fictional world). It follows that changes of state which are wished for, imagined, or dreamed are not events. However, the real acts of wishing, imagining, or dreaming can qualify as events.

*Resultativity*, the second requirement of the event, is a correlate of the event's reality. The change of state that constitutes an event is neither inchoative (begun) nor conative (attempted) nor durative (confined to an ongoing process). Rather, it must be resultative in that it reaches completion in the narrative world of the text.

Reality and resultativity are necessary conditions of an event in the strict sense. However, it is clear that these requirements alone are not sufficient to turn a change of state into an event, for they can both be fulfilled by trivial changes of state in a narrative world.

In the following pages, I shall describe five features which I believe a change of state must display if it is to be described as an event. These features are listed in a hierarchical order because of their different levels of importance. If a change of state is to be called an event, it must display the first two features in the hierarchy to some degree at least. Furthermore, the five features are gradational and can be realized to varying degrees (unlike binary features, which are either unambiguously present or absent). This means that events can have varying levels of eventfulness. There is not a fixed universal threshold of eventfulness which a change of state must cross in order to become an event; conversely, we cannot specify a minimum level of eventfulness below which events cannot exist. Instead, the amount of eventfulness needed to turn a change of state into an

event is dependent on the influence of three contextual factors: the concept of eventfulness which characterizes the particular epoch, literary movement, or genre to which a work belongs; the nature and content of that particular work; and, finally, the individual judgment of the recipient.

Before considering the five features which determine the level of eventfulness in a change of state, let us summarize the three analytical categories which we have introduced into our discussion.

1. The change of state;
2. The event, a particular type of change of state that presupposes reality and resultativity and fulfills certain additional requirements;
3. Eventfulness (German *Ereignishaftigkeit*, Russian *sobytijnost'*), a gradational property of events.

The five features which have a key role in determining the level of eventfulness in a change of state are derived neither from a prototypical perfect event, nor from the "unprecedented incident" ("ereignete unerhörte Begebenheit") with which Goethe defined the material of the novella[6], nor from Lotman's various concepts such as the "movement of a literary character beyond the limits of a semantic field," the "deviation from the norm" (Lotman 1970: 282-83), and the "crossing of a forbidden border" (Lotman 1973a: 86)[7]. Instead, my five features are based on a reduced form of the event. My description of them is based on the poetics of Anton Chekhov, who problematizes the naive eventfulness of Dostoevsky and Tolstoy. While the novels of the two realists show people who have the capacity to undergo fundamental transformations and transcend the boundaries of morality and the logic of personality, Chekhov's post-realist narratives place a major questionmark over the eventfulness of the world and the ability of people to change. Chekhov problematizes the no-

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6 Words spoken to Eckermann, 25 January 1827.

7 The border can be topographical, or else pragmatic, ethical, psychological, or cognitive. An event consists of a deviation from the normative regularity which applies in a given narrative world and which preserves the order of that world so long as it is not violated. Lotman contrasts "sujet texts" with "sujetless" and "mythological texts," which do not relate new developments in a changing world but represent the cyclical iterations and isomorphisms of a closed cosmos, the order of which is fundamentally affirmed by the text. For Lotman, the modern "sujet text" is the result of the interaction of the two typologically primary text types; Lotman (1973b).

tion of eventfulness by demonstrating a number of shortcomings in what we superficially take for events. By examining these shortcomings, we can identify more accurate features of eventfulness.

1. *Relevance.* The first condition of eventfulness is that the change of state must be relevant. Eventfulness increases in conjunction with the degree to which the change of state is felt to be an essential part of the narrative world in which it occurs. Changes that are trivial (in terms of the axioms which underlie the work) do not give rise to eventfulness and thus, in this respect, do not produce events.

The idea of relevance is, of course, a relative one, as Chekhov illustrates in a story with the narratologically promising title "An Event" ("Sobytie"). The story is, apparently, about nothing more than how a cat gives birth and Nero, an enormous dog, eats all the kittens, but, in Chekhov's hands, it illustrates the subjectivity which can influence how we evaluate relevance. The birth of the kittens is a happening of great significance for the little children Vanja and Nina. Then, while the adults readily accept Nero's eating the kittens and feel nothing more than surprise at the dog's insatiable appetite, the children feel that the world has come to an end.

Generally speaking, the criticism of the event in Chekhov's eventless stories tends to undermine the apparently self-evident place of relevance in realism by showing how the evaluation of relevance depends on the subject and its physical and psychological state.

2. *Unpredictability*. Eventfulness increases in proportion to the extent to which a change of state deviates from the doxa of the narrative (i.e. what is generally expected in the narrative world). This does not mean that the event must rest, as Lotman suggests, on the breach of a norm or the violation of a prohibition. Instead, the essence of the event lies in the fact that it breaks with expectations. A highly eventful change is paradoxical in the literal sense of the word: it is not what we expect[8]. "Doxa" refers to the narrative world and its protagonists and is not equivalent to the reader's script (what the reader expects in the action on the basis of certain patterns in literature or the real world)[9]. A change of state that can

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8 Aristotle defines paradox as that which contradicts general expectation (*De arte rhetorica* 1412a 27).

9 A change of state that comes as a surprise to the protagonists in a narrative world can be perfectly predictable for an expert reader if it is a genre characteristic. It follows that the reader's script concerning the course of a work and the protagonists' expecta-

be seen to follow the normal rules of a narrative world is predictable and thus will have a low level of eventfulness, even if it is of great importance to the individual protagonist(s) involved in it. If a bride marries her groom, it is not, strictly speaking, eventful. But it is likely to be surprising for everyone involved, including the bride herself, if, as in Chekhov's story "The Betrothed" ("Nevesta"), she dumps her prospective husband just before the wedding, after all the arrangements and plans have been made. If this happens, the failure to marry is far more eventful than the marriage everyone expects would be.

Another of Chekhov's marriage stories, "The Teacher of Literature" ("Uchitel' slovesnosti"), illustrates how unpredictability is not a constant feature but can change during the course of a narrative. Masha Shelestova seems unattainable to Nikitin, the teacher of the title, and declaring his love for her means gathering all his courage and taking a truly heroic step, for it seems completely impossible to him that he will ever be able to marry his sweetheart. The reader, on the other hand, can tell from Masha's behavior that she is not likely to resist the proposal with any great conviction; and, after the hero takes the decisive step, he must himself recognize that what he supposed to be a border crossing was actually a perfectly normal act that everyone expected.

Relevance and unpredictability are the primary criteria which underlie the continuum of eventfulness. A change of state must meet both of these requirements to a minimum degree, if not more, if it is to be perceived as an event. We can then go on to consider several additional, less crucial requirements.

3. *Persistence.* The eventfulness of a change of state increases with its consequences for the thought and action of the affected subject in the framework of the narrated world.

A lack of persistence can be observed in Chekhov's "The Teacher of Literature." After Nikitin's dream of being united with his beloved Masha Shelestova becomes reality against all his expectations, he enters into the untroubled life of the petit bourgeoisie, where he is forced to realize that his marriage was hardly the surprising event for which he took it and was really a perfectly reasonable outcome of his regular visits to the Shelestovs' household. This sobering realization results in the desire to leave

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tions concerning the course of their lives must be treated as distinct and separate notions.

the secure world of his quiet and happy married life and break out into another world, “to work himself at some factory or big workshop, to address big audiences, to write, to publish, to raise a stir, to exhaust himself, to suffer.” At the end of the story, Nikitin confides in his diary and complains of the triviality which surrounds him, confronting the urge that “I must escape from here, I must escape today, or I shall go out of my mind!” Even here, however, there is considerable doubt—as in many of Chekhov’s breakout stories—about the persistence of the change in mental state.

Chekhov frequently disguises the lack of persistence in his stories by bringing them to an end before the stories of the characters themselves have ended. Interpreters who transform the potential of the open ending into reality are imbuing the change of state with a resultativity and persistence which are not present in the construction of the story itself.

4. *Irreversibility*. Eventfulness increases with the irreversibility of the new condition which arises from a change of state. That is to say, the more improbable it is that the original condition can be restored, the greater the level of eventfulness. In the case of rethinking (*prozrenie*, the mental event that was of such concern to the Russian realists), an insight must be gained that excludes any return to earlier ways of thinking. An example of irreversible events is provided by the chain of conversions that runs through Dostoevsky’s *The Brothers Karamazov*. None of the converted persons could conceivably return to their godless initial position in future.

Chekhov’s narratives cast doubt on every aspect of the idea that there can be irreversible mental states and decisions to act. In none of his works is the certainty with which a character escapes from constraints more precarious than in “The Betrothed.” A shadow is cast over the finality of the bride’s escape by the fact that it is Aleksandr who persuades her not to marry. Aleksandr, who perpetually calls on women to break their bonds, is as much subject to a repetitive cycle as Andrei Andreich, the bridegroom who is forever playing the violin and, as his name shows, nothing more than his father’s son. Will the bride really be able to escape the circle of her old existence, or will she be drawn back into it by the force of repetition that rules the world she is trying to leave? This contentious question is raised by the famous final sentence that Chekhov made ambiguous by modifying the final draft to include the phrase “as she supposed”: “She went upstairs to pack, and the morning of the next day she

said goodbye to her family and, gay and full of spirits, left the city, as she supposed, forever."

5. *Non-Iterativity*. Repeated transformations, even if they are both relevant and unpredictable, represent at best a low level of eventfulness. Chekhov demonstrates this with the marriages in "The Darling" ("Dushechka") and the concomitant radical changes of state in Olja Plemjannikova, the heroine of the story. The complete reformulation of her basic values to fit in with the world of her husband seems to be an event in her first marriage, but repetition shows it to be the unchanging emptiness of a vampire's existence.

The eventfulness of "The Betrothed" is undermined by the fact that the breakout of the title heroine occurs in a context of negative iterations which envelop the female characters, the mother and the grandmother, just as much as they do the groom and the mentor. Perhaps the journey of the former bride to Petersburg, her return home, and the—"as she supposed"—ultimate breakout "forever" are nothing more than the beginning of a new cycle.

When it represents iteration, narration approaches the mode of description; it is anything but coincidental, therefore, that descriptive genres show a strong preference for treating iterative occurrences and actions.

## 3. Criticisms and Counter-Arguments

In this essay, I have described a set of features for defining a sliding scale of eventfulness which are essentially the same as those I have developed in previous articles (Schmid 1992 and various essays on www.narrport.uni-hamburg.de). This final section attempts to deal with a number of objections that have been raised against them.

The first significant objection concerns the lack of homogeneity in the five criteria of eventfulness. Although I have attempted to formulate the criteria in such a way that homogeneity exists between them, a certain amount of disparity is inevitable because of the fact that we are dealing with different components of eventfulness. However, any concerns that this disparity may raise are surely outweighed by the fact that the feature set has been compiled on the basis of empirical evidence. Moreover, it acquires a certain compensatory homogeneity because all the features were deliberately derived from one particular kind of narration, Chekhov's post-realist narration and its critical discourse on the event concept.

A second key objection holds that the features I have introduced involve interpretation and thus have no place in narratology, which, like the study of metrics, for example, is concerned with objective description rather than interpretation. It cannot be denied that the features I have described above are subject to the influence of interpretation. This is only a problem, however, if we subscribe to the belief that interpretation is avoidable in the first place. The fact of the matter is that there is little merit in the dichotomy between objective description and subjective interpretation. To take the example of metrics again, interpretation is not as remote from this subject as many critics would have us believe. Deciding, for example, whether a given verse form should be described as syllabotonic or purely tonic is, in many ways, a question of interpretation. Narratology must not confine itself to providing analytical tools which can supply objective descriptions that are free from presuppositions and independent of interpretation; we have little to gain by making that our aim. To give just one example, the narrator authority, as long as it is not explicitly presented as an anthropomorphic figure but semantically dependent on symptoms in the text, is heavily dependent on interpretation. The controversy that surrounded free indirect discourse in the 1910s shows how rich in presuppositions the models of description that we employ can be. Even the basic task of *recognizing* a change of state is, more often than not, heavily dependent on interpretation, either because the explicit properties of the initial and final states are not equivalent and thus require suppositions which make them comparable, or because the difference between the states is not unambiguous. In Chekhov's late story "The Lady with the Dog" ("Dama s sobachkoj"), for example, critics are bitterly divided over whether the change in inner state diagnosed by both hero and narrator (the hero's conversion from a cynic into a truly loving man) ever takes place at all.

Finally, the term "eventfulness" has met with disapproval. Certainly, the term may seem awkward in English, but German *Ereignishaftigkeit* is acceptable, and Russian *sobytijnost'* and its opposite (*bessobytijnost'*) are both concepts which are frequently used by literary critics.

What, then, can we learn from our inventory of criteria of eventfulness? What can they do for us? Well, they are heuristically helpful in so far as they assist us in identifying and differentiating key narrative phenomena. And, by doing so, they can help us to articulate our interpretation of a work. Eventfulness is a culture-specific and historically unstable phenomenon of narrative representation. Our inventory is therefore

of particular importance for dealing with problems of cultural typology and the history of literature and thought: it raises questions that can guide our exploration of the historically changing possibilities and limitations of eventfulness and the concepts of eventfulness that are associated with specific historical periods.

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# Narratology and the Narrative

In recent years the concept of narrative has become strikingly prominent both in literary theory and in cognitive psychology, theology, jurisprudence, and many other disciplines[1]. History tells us, however, that an increase in a concept's popularity does not make its definition any clearer, and narratology is no exception to this rule. The renewed appeal of narratology has brought with it a seemingly unstoppable expansion in the range of phenomena which fall under its remit. Do all narratives share a common core that defines narratology as a field of study? Is everything and anything we say about narrative texts, films, comic strips, or computer games a narratological statement? Do narratological methods even exist as such? Can we draw a dividing line, however ill-defined it may be, between objective description and subjective response in such a way that we can define the difference between narratological analysis and interpretation? It is questions such as these that are posed in numerous narratological texts by critics whose aim, whether explicitly stated as such or not, is to clarify the nature of narratology itself.

In this essay, we shall be concerned primarily with the first of the above questions, the question of what 'narrative' actually means. Our first step will be to describe the problems connected with a general theory of narrativity, on the basis of which the prototype of 'narration' will be suggested as an alternative starting point (1). We shall then examine the features of the prototype which concern first the function of the story (2) and

[1] This is admirably illustrated in the overview by Nünning/Nünning (2002).

second the relationship between representation and story (3). Finally, we shall consider the implications of our modified theoretical architecture for the generally accepted model of narrative communication (4).

## 1.

Most definitions of narratology are derived from definitions of its object of study, which is typically seen as consisting of something referred to as 'narrative'[2]. One particularly well-known definition is that of Gerald Prince, who defines a narrative as "the representation of at least two real or fictive events in a time sequence, neither of which presupposes or entails the other"[3]. Other proposals have suggested supplementing the chronological connection with a causal one. For example, Richardson argues that "narrative is a representation of a causally related series of events"[4].

It is generally agreed, then, (1) that a narrative is a representation and (2) that the object of this representation exhibits a certain set of properties: namely, chronological and causal arrangement. It is clear that such a concept of narrativity cannot be equated with the content of any particular medium (e.g. films or texts). For a start, narrative material can be found in non-narrative texts (e.g. in legal evidence, critical essays, etc.). Furthermore, it is possible for narrative texts to contain non-narrative elements (e.g. description or argumentation). In such cases, the text involved is defined as a narrative by its paratextually marked text type (e.g. novel or novella) or by the predominance of narrative over non-narrative sections in it. That, at least, is the conventional view.

The applicability of the above definition can be tested by comparing it with the codified findings of narratology as presented in various introductions to the subject[5]. Take, for example, the phenomenon of how time is represented, the study of which is one of the foremost success stories of narrative theory. A phenomenon such as analepsis can be shown to be present in almost every kind of narration and thus appears to prove the va-

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2 An alternative tradition links the concept of narratology directly and exclusively to the structuralist programme of the 1960s onwards and its direct descendants; see Onega/Landa (1996: 1f.).

3 Prince (1982: 4).

4 Richardson (2000: 170).

5 Chatman (1978); Rimmon-Kenan (1983); Martínez/Scheffel (1999); Abbott (2002).

lidity of the conventional definition's underlying assumption that there are such things as typically narrative phenomena.

Now consider a different, distinctly modern phenomenon in the representation of time: bullet time, which is 'officially' defined as "dynamic camera movement around slow-motion events"[6,7], Camera movement is relatively restricted, if not completely static, during conventional slow-motion sequences. In bullet time, on the other hand, it can be accelerated considerably. The description of the technique should perhaps be completed by adding that bullet time is frequently employed in order to visualize processes (e.g. a figure dodging bullets) that would be hardly visible, if at all, in real time. The effectiveness of bullet time as a technique stems from the fact that the physical nature of the camera, which has influenced every frame since cinema began, is overcome by the use of a virtual camera[8]. The result is that the camera's perspective is completely disconnected from the space and time of events in the narrated world of the film. This technique exploits the indexical connection which traditional film production establishes between cinematic signs and their referents. Because of the symbolic nature of the linguistic sign, it is not possible to create the same effect in the medium of language[9].

Let us consider a further example, internal focalization. We are all familiar with the definition of internal focalization in the narrative text; it is the situation that occurs when the scope of perception is defined by the position of a character. The spatial and temporal orientation of the narrative is bound to the first-person here and now of a particular character; fo-

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[6] Matrix Website (2003).

[7] Bullet time was made famous by the first part of the *Matrix* trilogy, and it did not take long for many other films to imitate the technique. See the *Matrix* website for a description of the technical challenges posed by bullet time and the relationship between bullet time and the Japanese anime.

[8] The camera is a physical object with certain properties which have changed as cinema has developed. At first, it was so heavy and hard to move that tracking shots were unthinkable. Since then it has become very small and relatively easy to manipulate, but it is still a physical object, and a person can hardly move it quickly enough to circle an object several times during a couple of centimetres in the flight of a bullet while producing sharp images throughout.

[9] Not surprisingly, the same effect can be found in animated cartoons. The product of the bullet time found in the first-person shoot-'em-up computer games *Max Payne* (1999) and *Enter the Matrix* (2003) is an extreme slow-motion effect for all figures apart from the protagonist; it is thus not the same as the related cinematic visual effect.

cussing on the category of vision again, we can say that we see things through the eyes of a character. In films, apart from a small number of experimental exceptions, we hardly ever see things through the eyes of a character for any extended length of time. Even when we know only, or little more than, what a character knows, that character is usually seen from outside, with the result that the audience does not perceive the same things as the character but rather a combination of the character and his perceptions.

There is little to be gained by discussing the causes of these differences between the media; for our purposes, it is sufficient simply to identify their existence. Our examples show clearly enough that is hardly feasible for meaningful structural descriptions to be independent of the medium of representation[10]. Why, then, is analepsis an exception to this? Because analepsis ultimately depends on a structural prerequisite which is practically the smallest common denominator of all narration: the sequentiality of the representation[11]. Effects such as analepsis and prolepsis are created when the represented order deviates from the underlying order of the actions. The number of such basic phenomena is considerably limited because in most cases, as our examples have shown, additional, medium-specific factors come into play. It is not even unusual to find critics investigating phenomena which are completely dependent on the medium in question, as is the case with one of the richest subsectors of narratology, the study of how speech and thought are reproduced in narrative texts.

It should now be clear that the idea of narratology as a medium-independent metascience[12] contrasts starkly with the findings that have

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[10] I use the terms 'representation' and 'discourse' synonymously. The same applies to the terms 'story' and 'histoire.'

[11] Individual pictures (e.g. paintings which are not part of a cycle) may turn out to be narrative, but they can hardly employ analepsis unless they themselves consist of a sequence of distinct elements with clear chronological separation between them and an order which is unambiguously and schematically laid out. If, however, the order of the elements can only be determined on the basis of the internal logic of the action or reference to a previously known story, as in the paintings of the early Renaissance, it is clear that analepsis is not possible.

[12] Some narratologies make it perfectly explicit that they are restricted to the analysis of narrative texts or, in some cases, the even narrower domain of fictional narrative texts. However, they do not normally indicate which of their findings are specific to the chosen medium and which are not; see, for example, Rimmon-Kenan, who has a broad concept of narrativity but a more limited narratology: Rimmon-Kenan (1983: 1ff.).

actually been produced by research in the discipline. The vast majority of narratological findings, as presented in the standard introductory texts, are clearly linked to specific media, and it is not uncommon to find that their validity is confined to the most prominent strand of narratology, the analysis of narrative texts[13,14]. It is not hard to see why this is so. All representation takes place in a medium, and the characteristics of each particular medium dictate key properties of any representation that takes place in that medium, with the result that it is simply not possible to discuss representation in abstract terms. Overlooking medium-specific properties in order to derive a more abstract, medium-independent concept of the narrative may well be a useful way of communicating more quickly and concisely, but that does not mean that we should turn the resultant abstraction into our object of study itself, for to do so would mean hypostatizing a non-existent common element[15]. Granted, the narratives of every medium share the presence of a story, but the story is not in itself narrative; it is rather a self-contained meaningful structure which we shall consider in more detail below. The various narratives share certain representational phenomena which follow from highly general properties of discourse and sequentiality. But these shared features are not markers of narrativity. In other words, the concept of narrative is an abstraction which should be used with care because it abstracts away from the very matter that represents the focus of narratological interest in the first place. I suggest, therefore, that instead of defining narrativity in order to derive

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13 Onega/Landa (1996: 2); Rimmon-Kenan (1989); Wolf (2002).

14 Chatman was one of the first to analyse the media-related differences comparatively: Chatman (1978), (1980).

15 This criticism applies equally to Werner Wolf's outline of a media-aware narratology, which is otherwise remarkably perceptive and theoretically ambitious; Wolf (2002). He postulates the existence of narrative frames. Wolf treats the narrative as a frame which is medium-independent but then uses the prototype of narration, which is medium-dependent, as a means of orientation: Wolf (2002: 29, 35). Even so, it turns out that the prototype has no role in his model; instead, he develops the idea of the medium-independent narrative frame, which he uses as the basis for his model of a narratology that crosses the bounds of individual media. In my view, however, it is precisely this concept of the narrative frame that is theoretically unsatisfactory. The reason is that the phenomena involved can actually be explained perfectly well without the introduction of such a frame. Humans recognize the story and group together everything in which they can identify a story. We shall return to the histoire as a self-contained meaningful structure in the next section.

the form and content of narratology from it, it will be more appropriate to take an alternative approach and analyse the theory behind both the critical tradition and the suggestions of our own linguistic intuition.

"A narrator tells an audience of listeners something that happened"[16]. With this description, Kayser captures the essence of what he calls the "archetypal epic situation,"[17] which we might refer to in more modern terms as the "prototype of narration"[18]. The concept of prototypical categories should be familiar and can be summarized briefly as follows: prototypical categories are defined by markedly typical exemplars rather than clear boundaries consisting of atomic features. Any of the exemplars in a category can be relatively distant from the typical exemplar without thereby losing its membership of the category. For example, the robin can be seen as the prototypical bird and the penguin as a class member which, although located at the edge of the category, is still linked to the prototype[19]. Adopting the prototype model allows us to treat the narration in films, the narration in comic strips, and the narration in computer games as different forms of 'narration,' each of which is located at a greater or lesser distance from the prototype, oral narration.

Taking a prototype of narration as our starting point brings with it two advantages for the construction of our theory. First, we do not need to search for a definition of the class 'narrative' whose features concur with

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16 Kayser (1965: 349; original version German).

17 This resembles Weinrich's formulation: Weinrich (1964: 48).

18 Monika Fludernik and Werner Wolf also describe narrativity by borrowing the concept of the prototype from cognitive science: Fludernik (1996: 13ff.) and Wolf (2002). As Kayser had done before her, Fludernik takes spontaneous narratives in the context of a conversation as her prototype, while Wolf takes the fairytale (i.e. a particular form of written fictional narration) as his prototype because of his view that fictionality is a crucially important element of the prototype. Evidence against treating literacy as a prototypical feature can be found in the fact that everyday oral narration is far more widespread than written narration (and was also socialized at an earlier date). This has left its mark not least on the descriptive terminology of narratology, where the use of the term 'voice' continues to persist. It is also far from certain that fictionality is a prototypical feature. It is less common than non-fictional narration, for despite the flood of contemporary fictional narration, narration about one's own experiences or those of others still constitutes by far the greater part of everyday communication (oral narration to family and friends, news, reports, etc.). Moreover, fictional narration can be perfectly well described as a complex form of everyday narration, while the converse is not as plausible.

19 Rosch (1975); Kleiber (1998).

some phenomenon or other in the real world (e.g. a mental frame). Second, the prototype's set of features can be considerably more extensive than that of the class itself, for not all the phenomena that we intuitively link to the prototype 'narration' need display exactly the same features (indeed, if they were required to do so, we would end up with counterintuitive and unproductive results). We can safely take Kayser's description of the archetypical narrative situation as a good starting point—but no more than that—for our next task, which is to describe the prototype more precisely.

Let us summarize our findings so far. For a long time, the inseparability of medium and representation was widely ignored by narratologists. Today, however, it has become the centre of attention. In the traditional concept of narratology as a theoretical discipline, narratology was typically treated as a metascience, a science whose subject was a narrativity present in a wide range of unrelated media. At first, this description of the narrative was regularly combined with a corresponding disregard for the role of the medium, but it was also chosen by the media-aware models of more modern narratology. We have criticized this approach here on the grounds that there is little place for the idea of a universal narrative entity given that all representation is deeply and inherently dependent on its medium; not even the histoire can be treated as a defining feature of narrative. If we choose not to follow the path of hypostatizing the essence of narrativity, we must identify an alternative way of describing our field of study. This we have found in the prototype model. Our prototype is based on everyday narration; in the following pages, we shall examine the properties of this prototype in more detail and use them to define the field of study of narratology itself.

## 2.

Narration relates 'something that happened.' Narratologists have shown considerable ingenuity in their efforts to define more precisely what such a set of happenings, or events, actually is. Martínez and Scheffel give a clear account of the critical consensus when they define the totality of events (*Geschehen*) as the chronological order of events and distinguish the story (*Geschichte*) from it:

> The totality of events, a sequence of individual events, is integrated into the unity of a story if, in addition to its chronological structure, the sequence of events displays a

> causal structure such that the events not only follow one another but also follow from one another[20].

But even here, creating a category called 'story' with as comprehensive a list of features as possible leads to a curiously unsatisfactory theoretical concept. For one thing, the criterion of causality proves to be too weak; for another, almost every story that is narrated displays properties which extend beyond the simple presence of a causal and chronological connection.

The philosopher Noël Carroll has used the term 'narrative connection' to draw together a set of criteria for describing narrativity:

> A narrative connection obtains, when (1) the discourse represents at least two events and/or states of affairs (2) in a globally forward-looking manner (3) concerning the career of at least one unified subject (4) where the temporal relations between the events and/or states of affairs are perspicuously ordered, and (5) where the earlier events in the sequence are at least causally conditions for the causations of later events and/or states of affairs (or are contributions thereto)[21].

For our purposes, we can ignore the criteria which relate to the description of discourse; what is important is Carroll's reference to the perspicuity of the chronological order and the relative (as opposed to absolute) importance of the causal explanation. Jon-K. Adams has pointed out that it is rare for causality in the sense of an efficient cause to establish a sufficiently strong connection between events; he argues that the resultant gap is filled above all by the intentions of the characters involved. Drawing on von Wright, he speaks of "intentional explanations"[22].

However, only human or human-like figures can have intentions. This is reflected in Dorrit Cohn's addition of the presence of characters to the properties which define the narrative: "narrative is a series of statements that deal with a causally related sequence of events that concern human (or human-like) beings"[23]. Numerous exceptions to this qualification can

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[20] Martínez/Scheffel (1999: 25; original version German).

[21] Carroll (2001: 126). Carroll investigates narrative connections because his interest is directed not at narrative texts as such, but rather at the kind of connection that exists in stories which are perceived as being narrative in nature.

[22] Adams (1991) also (rightly, in my view) repudiates Barthes's thesis that the causal connection is ultimately an illusory one.

[23] Cohn (1999: 12). Wolf's definition of narrative in computer games even goes so far as to give the character a central role: "characters in conflict within an on-screen or 'diegetic' world," Wolf (2001: 93).

be found (e.g. modern cosmologies and other descriptions of microcosmic and macrocosmic processes). Even so, Cohn's expanded definition captures an important aspect of what recipients expect to find in a story.

We can also increase our understanding of the concept of story by considering the theory of motivation in aesthetic narrative texts. Three kinds of motivation have been identified: (1) causal motivation, which connects events in terms of a meaningful causal structure; (2) final motivation, which is present when the course of events in the narrative world is determined by a concept such as fate or providence; and (3) compositional motivation, which means that the sole motivation behind the facts in the narrative world is their function in the overall intentional framework of the work[24]. In general terms, then, motivation can be understood as a meaningful structure which establishes a meaningful connection between a given element of the text, and thus of the narrated world, and other such elements.

To conclude, the story is, as has been emphasized repeatedly, a meaningful structure. It gathers the totality of events, characters, and regions into an organized and meaningful whole[25]. The most important components of this meaningful structure are chronology, causality, teleology, and intentionality. In addition, narratological critics, and indeed authors themselves, have identified and described further types of meaningful structure at many different levels of abstraction[26]. In my view, it is particularly important to distinguish the meaningfully structured story from its representation in the discourse. The narrated story, not simply the story *per se*, is narration. The general aspects of the meaningful structure called 'story' which we have mentioned are certainly an important area of study, not least for cognitive science, but they should not be metonymically equated with the domain of narrativity, for the latter is characterized by two additional features: the act of narration and the mode of representation, an additional meaningful structure all of its own[27].

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[24] Martínez (1996: 13ff.).

[25] Stierle (1975); Schmid (1982).

[26] An example is Labov's classic study: Labov (1972). On this, see also works belonging to the genre of the American-style author's handbook; e.g. Tobias (1999).

[27] On this suggestion that the term 'narrative' be made more specific so that it can only refer to representation, see also Genette, who, however, argues that the term should be restricted to linguistic representation: Genette (1994: 201).

## 3.

Our prototype, 'somebody tells other people something that happened,' contains features which concern the relationship between the narrative act and the story without being entirely attributable to either of them. Prince's generalizing definition, with its concept of representation, is also based on this relationship between discourse and histoire. In the prototype, the property of closure is ascribed to the story relative to the time of narration, thus exploiting the non-identity of discourse and story that is stressed in the concept of representation. We shall examine the function of presentation (i.e. actualization by narration) in more detail below; here, we are concerned instead with the question of whether the property of closure can be used to develop a definitive criterion for determining what can and cannot be associated with the prototype of narration.

H. Porter Abbott is the most recent in a long line of narratologists whose definition of narrativity includes the fact that, as highlighted in Kayser's description of the archetypal epic situation, the totality of events which is narrated must lie in the past and have attained closure[28]. Even in the case of fictional texts, Abbott argues, it is assumed that the fictional narrator narrates a story which has already been concluded in the fictional world. Abbott includes and discusses this qualification of the story because, in his view, some computer games appear to contain narrative structures at first sight but, when examined more closely, should be excluded from the class of 'narratives' precisely because anteriority is a property of narrated stories. He examines the example of MMORPGs (massive multiuser online role-playing games). The framework of the action in such a game is determined by the game designer, but the actual course of the action unfolds only as it is shaped by the deeds of the players within the constraints of the game world. "But is this a narrative? If things are happening right now for the first time, do we call it a narrative?

[28] The particular importance attached to this aspect in the narrative theories of German-speaking critics is arguably due not least to the fact that Goethe and Schiller emphasize it in their essay "Über epische und dramatische Dichtung"—the typical narrator relates "things that lie in the past in their entirety," Goethe (1986: 127; original version German). See also Käte Friedemann's definition, according to which the narrator intends that what is narrated should always appear "as something which has already come to an end in the past," Friedemann (1965: 27).

Do we refer to our lives, for example, as narrative?"[29]. Consequently, Abbott argues that a key criterion of narrative is that the story must exist, or appear to exist, prior to its narration, and stresses that in fictional texts we find no more than the impression of a preexisting story.

Abbott's example is indeed illuminating, for it is true that we do not treat our lives as narratives. However, the reason he suggests for this—the fact that our lives are taking place at this very moment—is a highly questionable explanation. So, plausible as his example may seem, let us first examine the validity of the argument behind it. How is the point in time of narration related to the point in time of what is narrated? Is it possible for something that is happening at this very moment to be narrated? Forms of live reporting, such as radio broadcasts of football matches, illustrate that the events do not need to have come to an end before they can be narrated. The same is true of fictional narration, as the example of the epistolary novel makes clear. Time moves forward after each letter, and each subsequent letter appears at a point in time that was still part of the future at the time of the preceding letter. The events, therefore, do not need to be completed in order for them to be narrated in the broadest sense of the word[30].

But is it not nonetheless conceivably possible that the assumption of chronological separation could still apply to the relationship between an individual event (as opposed to the totality of events) and its narration? Only after the striker has taken a shot on goal can the commentator say 'he shoots'. Does this mean that chronological separation is indeed a constitutive element of narration? To move to a different medium, what is the situation as far as football matches broadcast on television are concerned? In the case of a live broadcast, the gap between an event and its representation in the medium is only a matter of milliseconds, but even so it is indisputable that the separation is there. And yet something in our intuition stops us from using the word 'narrative' in such cases. The reason for this, however, lies arguably less in the brevity of the chronological sepa-

[29] Abbott (2002: 32).

[30] More accurately, the epistolary novel communicates two states of affairs. The level of the narrator is home, as outlined above, to the narrative component. At the same time, however, the real reader holds a completed book in his hand. Thus, the epistolary communication that the novel relates has closure at the level of author and reader, as can be made explicit by introducing an editorial figure into the fictional world.

ration *per se* and more in the nature of the medium involved[31], as the familiar term 'transmission' indicates, the events are mechanically transferred into our living rooms. To return to the question of the role played by chronological separation in the category of narrative, it is clear that the separation can be anything between a few milliseconds and a much longer delay of arbitrary duration. In addition, however, it is clear that there are certain text types (e.g. prophecies) which are narrative but do not depend on the totality of events having taken place at some preceding point in time. The key point, then, is not so much the delay between the event and the narrative but rather the fact that the two are non-identical because the narrative represents the event in a medium.

We can be reasonably sure that the chronological separation cited by Abbott is one of the phenomena which can be analytically identified in the prototypical concept of narration. The presence of this chronological interval results from the fact that narration takes place in a medium. The chronological distance involved varies depending on the particular composition of the medium concerned and the way in which it is used. The MMORPGs excluded by Abbott are obviously anchored in such a medium; our lives are not. It should also be noted that oral narration is a unidirectional medium, while computer games are interactive and thus at least bidirectional. This means that the constructive contribution made by the player to the development of the eventual course of a game is different in nature from the contribution of a listener or reader to material in other media. In this sense, MMORPGs are identical neither with life nor with unidirectional media.

If Abbott's argument is no longer as plausible as it first seems, we are still left with the question of why his comparison with life is so informative. In actual fact, MMORPGs do have something in common with our lives: in both cases, it is our actions that bring the story into existence in the first place. While the narrative forms which have developed up to the present point in time do sometimes permit interruptions and other interference, their existence does not depend on such manipulation. In other words, as exemplified by the prototype of narration, the narrated event sequence is not changed by the narrative. The narrative is theoretically

[31] The present discussion does not consider the linguistic aspects of such television broadcasts.

independent of the story[32]. Interestingly, this is true even of fictional narratives, in which the story and the fictional world do not exist before they are produced by the act of narration. In certain computer games, however, the event sequence and the actions of the recipient are not independent of one another. In the adventure game, which is considered the paradigmatic example of a narrative genre, the player has to solve puzzles whose solution causes the plot to advance, usually in the form of animated sequences[33]. The story is predominantly preexistent, and for the most part, the player's task consists merely of following the prespecified sequence of actions to its conclusion. The story does not depend on the player, even if many games present the player with a number of alternative courses of action from which he must choose one to pursue. The genre is thus very close to the prototype. In the MMORPG, on the other hand, the rule system and properties of the fictional world mean that there are numerous factors which condition the actions of the player—but the actual story itself is not predetermined. It is true that the player is sometimes presented with a course of action, but it is entirely up to the player to determine the form in which it is followed, indeed whether it is followed all[34]. That is to say, the sequence of actions, the meaningful structure of the story experienced by the player, is largely dependent on the decisions of that player and of the other players. In terms of the independence of the fictional world from its representation, MMORPGs are not narratives. In terms of their relationship to the prototype of narration, they are, it should now be clear, markedly borderline phenomena.

[32] A prototype describes our collective knowledge. Its place in the critical debate has been superseded by a constructivism whose radicalism varies depending on the extent to which the story is treated as dependent on its representation. Hayden White was once cited repeatedly as a supporter of the more radical form of the theory, but he has since largely withdrawn from his position by replacing the concept of fiction with that of literacy. This move also does away with the shock that previously arose when the 'progressive' theory declared everyday knowledge to be false. White (2001).

[33] Klaus Walter believes that game and narrative in the adventure game are fundamentally separate entities with no more than a structural link between them: Walter (2002: 190ff.). This analysis is not convincing, however, for it fails to accord due importance to the role which the player's decisions have in shaping the action.

[34] In the *Everquest* MMORPG, the player is presented with quests by a number of non-player characters. To complete the quests, the player usually has to undertake further journeys and perform a series of tasks. Some players spend most of their time in the game pursuing such quests, while others avoid them completely.

## 4.

Our prototype of narration models a communication situation: 'A narrator tells an audience of listeners something that happened.' One of the dominant movements in narrative theory is, in full agreement with this approach, based on a communication model with a relatively self-contained set of basic features[35]. The narratological communication model, however, is more complex and describes fictional communication along the channel of a narrative text as "communicated communication"[36], thereby distinguishing (at least) between the author and the narrator and between the narratorial reader and the authorial reader. This is plausible in so far as, because any nonfictional narrative speech can also be used in a fictional context, the more complex model of fictional narrative communication can be simplified to yield our prototypical communication situation exactly as we described it above. However, this is due not least to the fact that obvious theoretical differences between the two are completely overlooked because the more complex model quite understandably presupposes the properties of text-based fictional communication. Thus, for example, the stability of everyday oral narratives and the frequency with which they are repeated by different narrators in a social group (family, friends), is an important aspect of oral communication which, for obvious reasons, has no role in written communication. So, even though the standard model of narrative communication must be extended if it is to cover such aspects, we can still draw on it in our description of the communication situation in the prototype.

Here we are faced once more with the question of what the important, ultimately even decisive features of the prototype are. In particular, the question of whether every form of narrative must have a narrator—a source behind the utterance, behind the discourse—is not exactly trivial when it comes to defining what narratologists study. Reviewing contemporary approaches to this question, we find that there is an overwhelming consensus that the narratorial instance should be dispensed with[37]. A key reason for this appears to be the fact that abandoning the narratorial re-

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[35] Nünning (1989); Janik (1973); Onega/Landa (1996: 11).
[36] Janik (1973; original version German).
[37] One of the few exceptions is Andreas Mahler's extended review of Anke-Marie Lohmeier's *Hermeneutischer Theorie des Films*; he reaches the conclusion that films do not narrate because no narrator is present in them; Mahler (2001).

quirement allows narratology to cover more than just one particular medium. Tying narratology to the criterion of a narrator means that it is restricted to linguistic narration, which is unsatisfactory in so far as it is immediately obvious that there are a number of different forms in which stories can be represented and that the same story can be represented in several different media. However, the conventional response, which is to define the universal essence of narrativity as the representation of a story, is, in my view, highly inadequate for the reasons outlined above. Here again, I shall argue that reference to the prototype can help clarify the situation.

The narrator is the source of the discourse, one of the meaningful structures of a narrative. He is also partly responsible for another meaningful structure, that of the story. Furthermore, he pursues an objective when he narrates a story. This intentional element both leaves its mark on the first two meaningful structures and creates a dimension of meaning of its own. If we compare this communication situation with that of non-fictional film, we can see that, because the signs in the latter are index signs, the person who manipulates them assembles the discourse in a different, in fact constructive, way. In other words, someone who tells a story orally is able to draw on a linguistic system and numerous other standardized systems, and the representation of his story is shaped by his selections from all these systems. The effect of this on the recipient is that the narrator's presence is evident at several levels in every speech act. In the film—the non-fictional film, that is—on the other hand, the director does not produce the images; but he does decide on the focus of the shot, perspective, montage, use of sound, and other aspects, all of which allow the recipient to form inferences about the director. The differences between the media, therefore, condition different kinds of inference in the process by which meaning is created[38], but this does not change the fact that the identification of an intentionally acting designing intelligence is of crucial importance in cinematic communication too. We can conclude that when the representation of events in a medium is not accompanied by such a communicating intelligence (e.g. in the case of closed circuit tele-

[38] While an analysis of the corresponding situation in fictional films would be considerably more complex, it would not bring any new theoretical factors into the equation and can therefore be omitted here.

vision cameras), it can hardly be described as narration, not even in an extreme sense of the word[39].

The ascription of intentionality also lies behind the fact that the story of a narrative is always a narrated story, a communicated sequence of events. That is the theoretical difference between the story of a narrative and other kinds of event sequence, not only because of the role of the medium but far more because of the constant involvement of communication. One of the well-known central principles in the thought of Paul Grice is that the analysis of communication should take account of the fact that something is being communicated and use this insight as the basis for more far-reaching inferences[40]. The same applies to narrative communication irrespective of its medium. The communicated story is always, irrespective of the particular form in which it is represented, accompanied by an underlying layer of meaningfulness[41]. The conclusions which can and should be drawn from this, however, differ from one medium to the other.

Let us summarize our findings. A story is not narrative, but the representation of a story is. It should now be clear that a media-independent concept of narrative is nothing more than a marginally useful hypostatized abstraction. As an alternative, we have proposed that narrative should always be treated as something anchored in a medium. From this it follows that 'narratology' is a collective term for a series of specialized narratologies and not a self-sufficient metascience of its own. There are, therefore, separate narratologies for linguistic narration, for cinema, for comic strips, and so on. What they all share is the concept of story in the narrated world. We could correspondingly restrict narratology to examining phenomena of the histoire, such as plot structures, character models, and closure. However, such a restriction would be neither useful nor plausible in a field of study whose greatest and most productive achievements to date lie in the insights it has provided into how the histoire is represented[42]. The analysis of discourse phenomena is, of course, always and

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[39] An interesting special borderline case would easily occur if someone were to take tapes with such recordings and use them as the object of a work of art.

[40] See the famous 1967 William James Lectures: Grice (1989: 1–143).

[41] On this, see also Ann Rigney, who has already pointed out the potential benefits of relevance theory for the development of narratological theories: Rigney (1992).

[42] Genette points out that analyses of the story which separate it from its representation have only rarely described themselves as works of narratology: Genette (1994: 201).

inevitably conditioned by the qualities of the particular medium involved. Nonetheless, the constant exchange of data between the various specialized narratologies is commendably productive because of the shared properties of the media and the fact that many media are, in part, actually the product of the integration of other media (e.g. cinema, computer games).

The organization of the concept of narration is determined by the prototype 'a narrator tells an audience of listeners something that happened.' Closer analysis of the prototype yields a series of typical features. The histoire is a self-contained meaningful structure whose most important components are chronology, causality, teleology, and intentionality. The story is, relative to the time at which it is represented, closed and independent of its representation. The act of narration itself, irrespective of the structure of meaning in the particular representation involved, communicates a claim to be meaningful. This meaning, like that of the story and its representation, is attributed to an organizing intelligence; in the prototype, that intelligence is the narrator. The features of the prototype—and the list we have argued for here can only be an incomplete starting point—obviously do not need to be present in all instances of narration. Narratology too, we might say, has its penguins.

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# Narratology as Discipline: A Case for Conceptual Fundamentalism

“The king died, and then the queen died, and then she gave birth.”—With a bit of logical *laissez-faire* one can comfortably proceed from a minimal to a never ending story. Narratology, it seems, has mastered the trick: from paradigmatic and rock-hard ‘science of literature’ to best-hated victim of postmodernist critique and deconstruction, from sterile logo- and phallocentric villain to revered disciplinary ‘great-grandfather’ (Nünning) or rather, great-grandmother whose offspring resembles a family of old-testamental dimension. In a comprehensive survey preceding the one presented in the current volume Ansgar Nünning already lists no fewer than 35 ‘new narratologies’[1] in six categories, while Monika Fludernik identifies four ‘new directions,’ one of which—a case of retro-autogamy?—includes ‘traditional narratology’[2]. Seen in this light David Herman’s idea is indeed perfectly plausible, for he suggests to put the term narratology into the plural anyhow and henceforth use it as “interchangeable with narrative studies”[3].

Methodologically speaking recent investigations into narratology’s development and future potential as scientific methodology generally favour the straightforward progression from historical reconstruction to programmatic conclusion, while paying comparatively little attention to

[1] Nünning (2000: 351f.).
[2] Fludernik (2000).
[3] Herman (1999: 27 note 1).

conceptual base definitions. Short of resulting in outright paradoxical statements the trademark of such theory-free descriptive reconstruction is therefore often a tentative and somewhat fuzzy terminology. What, for example, is the 'new' narratology's or narratologies' proper methodological label? One recent survey refers to it alternately (and within a mere 7 pages) as a 'school of thought,' a 'scientific praxis,' a 'discipline,' a provider of 'terminological and descriptive tools,' then again as a 'discipline.' It raises the question whether "narratology is, indeed, a critical school like deconstruction" only to state five lines further that "if at all, narratology is merely a subdiscipline of structuralism." Yet the concluding paragraph offers comfort by declaring narratology "a flourishing discipline" once more[4]. Given such uncertainty about so-called 'classical' narratology's identity one can hardly expect its progeny to fare any better. Thus Nünning's investigation into the "rise, fall and renaissance" of narratology sets out similarly by quoting Todorov's definition of narratology as the 'science of narrative' and by referring to narratology as 'a flourishing discipline' (this time pointing specifically to that of the 1960s). However, the blossoms produced—the plentiful offspring of 35 'new narratologies'—for some reason only qualify as 'sub-disciplines.' Three pages later they are demoted to mere 'approaches,' and eventually they resurface in an even more modest form, namely as (interdisciplinary) 'projects'[5]. So what is narratology—approach, praxis, project, school, sub-discipline, discipline, science? And/or which narratology is what?

The merits of these and similar attempts at reviewing narratology's history and outlining its potential future development need not be reemphasised. To present a new taxonomy for an entire field of scholarly endeavour is to take an equally bold and necessary step. However, the frequent shift in categorisation which we observe in these taxonomies clearly demonstrates that merely descriptive surveys experience considerable difficulties in coming to grips with questions of principle, and par-

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[4] Fludernik (2000): "school of thought" (83), "scientific praxis" (84), "discipline" (85), provider of "terminological and descriptive tools" (86), "discipline" (87ff.), "narratology is, indeed, a critical school like deconstruction" and "if at all, narratology is merely a sub discipline of structuralism" (92), "a flourishing discipline" (93).

[5] Nünning (2000): "a flourishing discipline" (347), "sub disciplines" (349), "approaches" (352), (interdisciplinary) "projects" (353). The latter also seems to be the status claimed for Nünning's own 'cultural and historical narratology.'

ticularly with the problem of defining narratology's methodological identity. The question thus remains: "What *is* Narratology?"

In the following I will resort to a more systematic and fundamentalist approach, hoping that it might complement the empirically orientated surveys presented by Ansgar Nünning and others. The main points that I will attempt to argue are:

- One: the fundamental definition of narratology is to be that of a discipline, that is, a *system of scientific practices* for research into the *conditions of possibility*[6] of an object domain called 'narrative.'
- Two: claiming disciplinary status does not entitle narratology to recede into 'splendid isolation.' As a Human Science narratology has to remain 'anschlussfähig,' that is, it has to provide conceptual interfaces to other *systems of practice* of diverse methodological status (i.e., systems whose status might indeed range from approach to subdiscipline, or even to that of a fully-developed discipline).
- Three: it is therefore particularly important to define the methodological 'terms of trade' between narratology and its potential partners in order to ensure that the integrity of the procedures and terminology that define narratology's disciplinary identity be maintained.

On a more general level I am taking up a suggestion by Meir Sternberg who only recently—and quite categorically—stated that the "disciplinary foundations" of narratology have not even been laid[7]. In other words: whatever praise our historical reconstruction of the 'golden days' of Structuralism wish to sing, and irrespective of the great plans we might hatch for the hopeful narratological offspring, we must go back to the fundamentals. Sternberg believes that the following two questions need to be clarified: 1) "What is narrative?" and 2) "What becomes in it of the components shared with other genres?" In other words, he wishes to define narratology as a discipline *by explicating its object of study* in terms of its generic features.

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[6] My allusion to the Kantian *Bedingungen der Möglichkeit* should in this instance be taken as metaphorical. However, I do believe that theoretical approaches conceptualising of narratives as readerly constructs cannot ignore epistemological methodology.

[7] Sternberg (2001). Sternberg unfortunately does not fully avoid terminological inconsistency either: his opening sentence refers to "narrative theory;" the term however is used synonymously with "narratology" as from the second paragraph.

Though focusing on the same question of disciplinary status my own approach is different in that it does not concentrate on the generic features of the object domain, but on the *procedures* that can guarantee the narratological *system of practice's* integrity. More particularly, I will try to sketch what I believe to be a rational *modus operandi* for formulating narratology's fundamental concepts under the methodological constraints of disciplinarity.

The first question to be addressed is thus that of the theoretical definition of 'discipline' itself. Martin Guntau and Hubert Laitko, two of Germany's leading historians of science, have taken as their starting point our intuitive contemporary understanding of disciplines as *object orientated system of scientific practices*[8]. In this regard we must first distinguish between the pragmatic and social circumstances that govern any discipline's eventual institutionalisation, and the more fundamental theoretical definition concerned with the explication of the specific qualities that set a *scientific* (in the sense of: *scholarly* or 'wissenschaftlich,' as opposed to the narrower Anglo-American understanding of 'scientific' as 'naturwissenschaftlich') *object orientated system of practice* apart from non-scientific practices. It is crucial to realise that the notions of 'object' and 'practice' refer to different things in their scientific and non-scientific understanding respectively:

- non-scientific systems of practice are based on a notion of 'object' which is understood to signify a specific class of *empirical* objects, whereas scientific systems of practice are based on a notion of 'object' which is understood to signify the *system of properties and relations which are* <u>*shared*</u> by all empirical objects in a class.
- in a non-scientific context 'practice' is conceived of as engaging in a 'doing' with or on the empirical object. The purpose of this doing is to reach a final pragmatic goal, whereas in a scientific context 'practice' is conceived of as engaging in investigations into the generalised *system of properties and relations*. Assuming that it is theoretically impossible to ever reach the stage where all possible aspects of such a

[8] Guntau/Laitko (1987). The original German proposes the definition of 'discipline' as a "gegenstandsorientiertes System wissenschaftlicher Tätigkeiten." Cf. Guntau/Laitko (1987: 26).—Other (and in part more prescriptive) approaches in Philosophy of Science would need to be explored (Kuhn, Lakatos, Bayes, Toulmin, Hübner, Elkana). For more recent overviews on the field cf. Poser (2001), Chalmers (2001).

system have been explored the scientific practice is in theory ever-perpetuating (though in reality of course limited by pragmatic and social constraints).

Clearly, more than one such scientific *system of practice* may investigate an identical class of empirical objects while conceptualising them as different *scientific* objects, i.e., different *systems of properties and relations*. Take for example the corpus of Russian fairy tales studied by Propp which was, however, clearly not the exclusive domain of Formalist study, but also of interest to ethnological research projects. This observation immediately raises the question of how to tell the difference between competing conceptualisations of a particular object domain, and thus the difference between the various *disciplines* that engage in its study. The fundamental difference lies, according to Guntau and Laitko, in the procedures whereby the scientific object is identified, and in the terminology whereby it is subsequently described. Both—procedures and terminology—are highly discipline specific. Secondary conceptualisations that render complex models and unique theories of the object domain might be seen as the more obvious manifestations of disciplinary variance. But the root cause of their divergence is to be found in the respective scientific practices' unique and most basic methodological rules determining how to handle the object under investigation, and how to name its constituent parts and features.

Ideally speaking the integrity of a given discipline is thus the function of a consensus on procedures and terminology shared by those who subscribe to its *system of practice*. But disciplines would become stale and static if they were to make compulsory the use of a particular historical terminology: indeed, scientific progress is to a large degree dependent on constantly revisiting, refining and enriching one's terminology. If terminology can and indeed must thus change over time then the bulk of the responsibility for ensuring a discipline's identity rests on the agreement on rule-based *procedures*. The essence of these rules is to guarantee that in following a given procedure, we will not just elaborate further on the scientific object as a *system of properties and relations*, but will also be able to relate these observations back to *identical empirical objects* intersubjectively, and at any point in time. Being able to trace back each other's steps from theoretical constructs to the empirical domain is the norm which each and every member of a discipline must adhere to and expect to be valid. This is the theoretical core condition of disciplinarity and, at

the same time, the pragmatic precondition for building ever more complex models and theories[9].

We can now address the question of how to construct a terminology. Let us assume that there is a class of empirical objects called ‘narratives.’ Our task as narratologists would then be to elaborate at least one, if not an entire body of narratological theories each of which at the very minimum must fulfill the conditions that define a valid scientific description of the class as a *system of properties and relations*. An optimal valid description will be one that reflects on *all* the *conditions of possibility* of any member in the class labelled ‘narratives.’ A sub-optimal description may ignore some of these conditions; however, the more such conditions it ignores, the greater the risk that we will not be able to reach an agreement on how to bind it back to identical empirical objects—particularly when we try to evaluate the adequacy of more complex theories and models that were built on the basis of these sub-optimal descriptions. These descriptions must therefore be traced back to the fundamental level where we assign specific terms to specific phenomenological entities—features, qualities etc.—observed in the object domain.

To make things less abstract let us now concentrate on one such feature which most—but, as the examples of Fludernik or Sternberg show, not necessarily all—of us intuitively deem to be a necessary *condition of possibility* in every member of the ‘narratives’-class. This feature is that of symbolic representation of a structural real-world phenomenon called an ‘event.’ If we are right in our intuition then we can identify two major procedural requirements to be met by our undertaking. One: we need at least one element in our terminology which will enable us to describe the ‘event’-feature in *any* empirical ‘narrative.’ Two: such a term must fulfil

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[9] “To our mind procedural knowledge, rules governing the procedures for identifying the objects which represent the subject matter, are the central issue. [...] The procedures and results of their application are described in a language which is sufficiently precise to enable the researchers who communicate by way of this language to repeat the procedures in an identical way and thereby reproduce the results.”—“Im Zentrum steht unseres Erachtens [...] prozedurales Wissen, Vorschriften für die Verfahren, die zur Identifizierung der den Gegenstand repräsentierenden Objekte angewandt werden. [...] Die Prozeduren und die Ergebnisse ihrer Anwendung werden in einer Sprache ausgedrückt, die hinreichend genau ist, um den Forschern, die vermittelst dieser Sprache miteinander kommunizieren, die identische Wiederholung dieser Prozeduren und damit die Reproduktion der Ergebnisse zu gestatten.” Guntau/Laitko (1987 : 30f.) My translation (JCM).

more than just the referential function of pointing from 'within' narratology to an aspect of any of the empirical objects falling under the class-label 'narrative.' The term must also function as a *concept*, meaning that it must be possible to integrate it into *every system of properties and relations* that successfully models the entire class, that is, that represents a scientific vs. the original empirical object. This system will most probably contain a good deal of other such concepts (assuming that members of the 'narrative'-class have more than just the 'event'-property in common).

Taking these factors into account we can now attempt to visualise the terminology building process for the concept of 'event' in the form of a 'workflow' graph. The graph tries to show how this particular concept is arrived at by way of abstracting from a specific constellation of textual features, in this case, the juxtaposition of two propositions with a shared argument and opposing predicates (see Table 1).

Admittedly, every fundamental descriptive term will at closer scrutiny turn out to be rooted in an implicit frame of reference; its 'fundamentalist' status thus being of a relative nature only. However, in terms of the workflow (i.e., the methodology by which new concepts are generated) it is important to note that at this point we are still exclusively engaged in an inductive bottom-up process: we consider the formation of our narratological descriptive terminology only, disregarding the subsequent integration of elementary concepts into more complex clusters that begin to interact as a proper *system of properties and relations*. In methodological terms there is a great deal of merit in turning a blind eye at the various elementary concepts' frames of reference at this early stage. If each and every of our elementary descriptive terms—say, not just that for the 'event'-feature, but also those for the 'mediation'- and the 'anthropomorphic'-features—were taken from the *same* theoretical frame of reference we would run the risk of already enforcing such strong conceptual homogeneity at base level that our own narratological theory yet to be constructed would eventually result in little more than a mirror image of the theoretical frame of reference that influenced our choice of terminology.

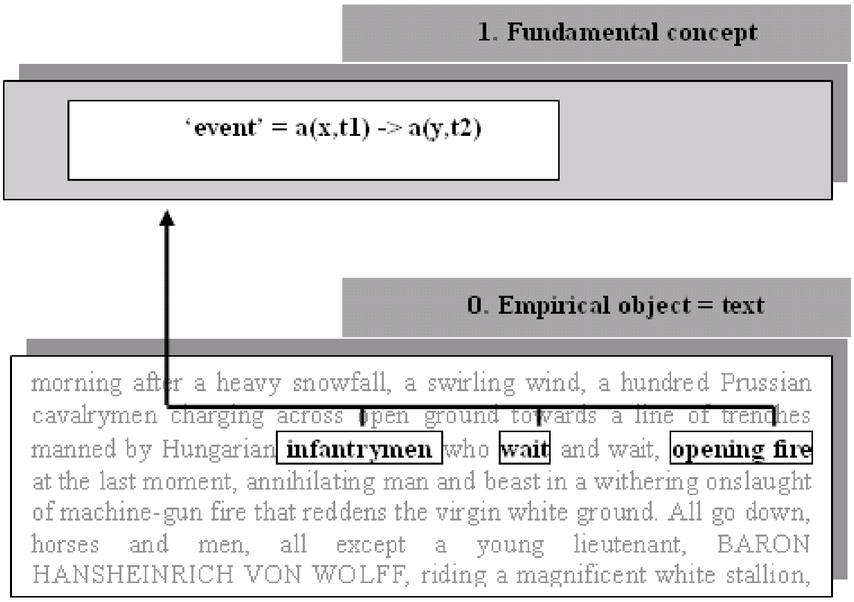



Table 1: Abstracting a fundamental concept from empirical data

Building a descriptive taxonomy on the conceptual level is one thing, but building a *relevant* taxonomy may turn out to be another. Ludwig Wittgenstein, I believe, pointed to this when he postulated in the *Logische Untersuchungen*: "We must do away with all *explanation*, and description alone must take its place. And this description gets its light, that is to say its purpose, from the philosophical problems."[10] In other words: a description for description's sake is not the solution, but one must be even more aware of rendering unwarranted explanations of empirical phenomena. The phenomenon as such *has* no inherent problematic, and hence there is nothing to explain and its description will indeed suffice. But there are of course questions that come to our attention and call for an explanation as soon as an aspect of the empirical object is accentuated by the 'light' of an external 'philosophical problem.'

[10] Wittgenstein (1958: 47). ("Alle Erklärung muß fort, und nur Beschreibung an ihre Stelle treten. Und diese Beschreibung empfängt ihr Licht, d.i. ihren Zweck, von den philosophischen Problemen," Wittgenstein [1975: 78f.].)

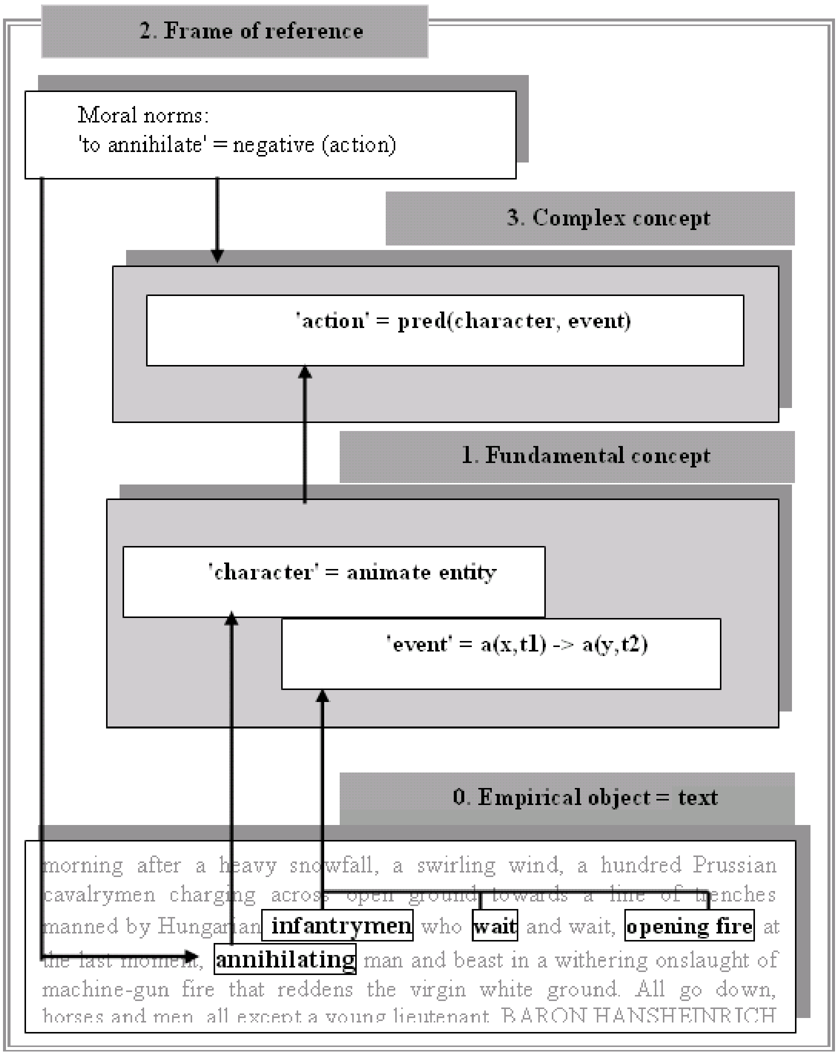


Table 2: Building of complex concept by explicating a frame of reference

For Wittgenstein philosophical problems were rooted in an inadequate use or understanding of language. This analytical notion of a 'philosophical problem' might be too restrictive in our case. The 'philosophical problem' that sheds a light on, and thereby renders purposeful the narratological description of its object domain must be understood in a wider sense. It is represented by externally motivated questions that are directed

at more than just one singular, idiosyncratic feature occuring in a given narrative, and represented by a singular entry in our terminology. True 'philosophical problems' and questions must rather deal with effects occurring (and reoccurring) on the *system level*. They are effects whose description necessitates complex terms, if not entire models. 'Event,' for example, for as long as we predefine this entry in our terminology in a strict bottom-up process as indicated in the workflow scheme, is a fundamental concept denoting an elementary feature of a given member of the object class 'narrative.' 'Action,' by contrast, refers to a *structural compound* made up of singular 'events' that has been generated according to certain systematic rules—thus 'action' already is a complex concept. It is hard to conceive of a genuine 'philosophical' or, for lack of a better word, 'hermeneutic' problem attaching to a phenomenon on the level of isolated 'events,' whereas our capability of identifying such problems on the systematic level of 'action' seems limitless. What does this mean in terms of the proposed terminological 'workflow' model? Complex concepts cannot be generated in a mechanistic fashion by simply grouping together a subset of fundamental terms between two brackets like, for example, 'event' and 'character.' Complex concepts like 'action' will always inherit an additional element, which in the case of the particular concept of 'action' is an import from a second theoretical frame of reference. We must therefore extend our workflow model accordingly and make it permeable so that conceptual enrichment can take place (see Table 2).

In the case of 'action' we might for example choose to add an interpreting predicate to this complex concept that explicates its moral value—an operation that presupposes our accessing of a 'moral' frame of reference. Accordingly, the complex concept of 'action' suggested in graph 2 is based on two fundamental concepts (event, character) plus a normative frame of reference which enables us to evaluate 'annihilation' as something which is morally bad.

'Moral philosophy' is of course just one of many potential explanatory frames of reference by which we can generate a particular complex concept of 'action' that combines the fundamental descriptive concepts 'event' and 'character' in the true sense of a partial *sub-system of properties and relations* within the global system that models the scientific object 'narratives.' The combinatory operation taking place at this level is mainly a deductive top-down process which seeks to bind together particular fundamental concepts according to a theory, model or hypothesis which has been formulated outside of narratology proper.

What about the other option: doing away with the constraints of a distinct terminological frame of reference restricted to the generation of fundamental terms, and short-circuiting it with the systematic frame of reference right from the outset? Wouldn't this yield far more powerful narratological concepts, concepts that offer such high level of systematic connectivity that we could come up with far more ambitious narratological *systems of properties and relations* modelling the scientific object 'narrative'? This is the alternative which I understand to be advocated by some of the more recent attempts at redefining narratology on a whole. It is, however, an approach that amounts to treating narratology with what I would like to label a 'methodological fabric softener;' an approach that is indeed bound to affect the conceptual fabric at base level. 'Natural narratology' in the variant proposed by Monika Fludernik, for example, eliminates the notion of 'event' from narratology's set of elementary terms and concepts, and proposes to replace it with the high-level concept of the 'natural' as "that which is anchored in humans' everyday experience."[11] One of this concept's theoretical frames of reference is cognitive theory—which in itself is a fully developed discipline. The consequences of Fludernik's proposal are far from modest: Not only is the consensus on what forms narratology's scientific object immediately put into question (we could simply argue that the old *system of properties and relations* has to be replaced by a new one), but it has become completely impossible to relate the scientific object in whatever form back to identical empirical objects unless we *all* agree to throw the concept of 'event' out of the window.

But let us not focus on what arguably may constitute an equally bold and extreme case. The problem which I would like to bring to attention here arises much earlier. For example, the Narratological Research Group at Hamburg University makes use of two conflicting notions of 'event.' Apart from the rather abstract 'bottom-up' semiological variant in the tradition of the early Prince and Todorov (which I myself happen to favour) there also is the emphatic variant which conceives of 'event' in terms of either Lotman's 'transgression theorem,' and/or by way of reference to

[11] Fludernik (1996: 107). Also see Fludernik's remark on the preceeding page: "The entities with which I will be concerned, narrative texts [...] will be conceived of in terms of generic frames which allude to frames from both literary and non-literary backgrounds [...]".

the 'script and frames' model. Both of the latter cases in actual fact already deal with 'event' as a complex concept in that they focus on the normative aspect of deviation from a given 'semantic mean': here an 'event' is not just any transformation, but a transformation which falls outside of the expected average (in the extreme case by not taking place at all) and thus becomes 'meaningful' by deviation. This concept of 'event' accordingly presupposes a value judgement and is no longer restricted to a mere description on the level of sequences of prepositional statements within a given 'narrative,' statements that fulfil the condition of having class-identical, yet changing predicates and an identical argument.

This is not to say that there is no need for such a complex concept. But we must now either accept that a fundamental and a complex narratological concept share the same name, as is demonstrated in Table 3[12].

[12] As graph 3 shows, the definition of 'event' in terms of a fundamental concept has remained unaltered. But there is now also a complex concept under the same name whose definition requires 'events' to be 'relevant.' Relevancy in turn is determined by comparing the potential 'event' in question to standardized event-patterns (SCRIPTS). A particular occurence is deemed relevant if and only if ('iff') it deviates from what we, according to our world view, consider as the normal variance in actualisations of this particular SCRIPT. The SCRIPT in question is that of 'infantrymen attacking;' the evaluation which we are asked to make is whether the way in which these particular infantrymen behave (= waiting, waiting, then suddenly attacking) is significantly original to justify its being labeled 'relevant.'—In graph 4 the narrative in its entirety is conceptualised as a sequence of SCRIPTS, the 'infantrymen'-SCRIPT being only one of them. It is assumed that all SCRIPTS are actualised within the margins of a standard deviation *specific to this narrative.* The question, then, is no longer whether the infantrymen in this particular scene behave outside of *our* norm of what infantrymen are expected to do, but rather whether the way in which they behave transgresses the *text-specific* 'standard deviation' in all SCRIPTS.

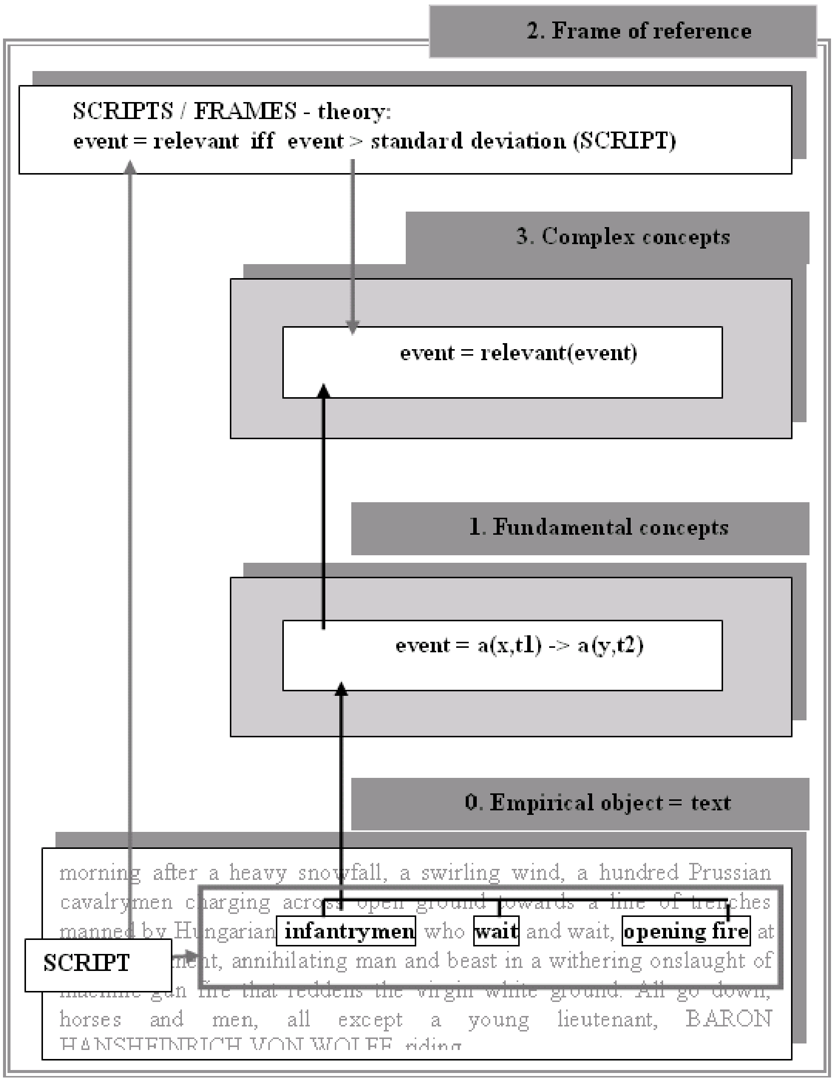



Table 3: Conflict between fundamental and complex definition of a concept

This is bound to lead to confusion, but could still be remedied by way of a new terminological convention. Rather more problematic is the second case (ref. graph 4) where the original fundamental concept of ‘event’ has been replaced by the new and emphatic one altogether. Terminological and conceptual erosions like these call narratology’s presumed status as discipline into question, for to redeclare elementary concepts as *com-*

*plex* ones is to invite non-agreement and fundamental dissent concerning the actual *empirical* objects which are represented, in the form of a *system of properties and relations*, as narratology's *scientific* objects.

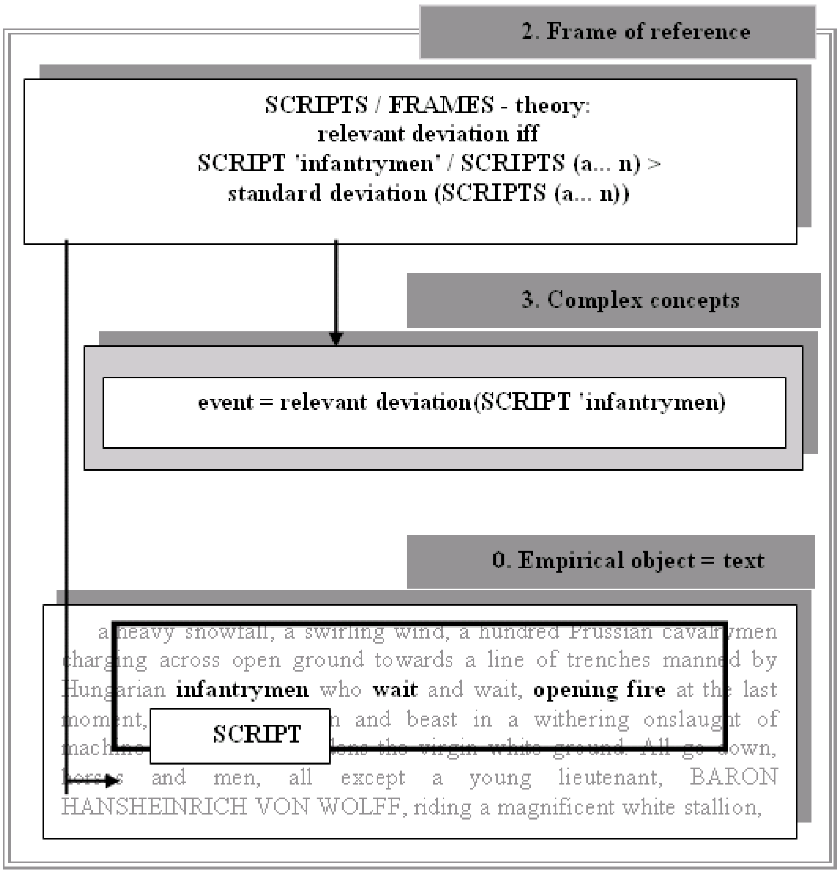



Table 4: Elimination of fundamental concept, resulting in
a 'baseless' complex concept

A number of conclusions may now be drawn from this examination of four approaches to the definition of fundamental and complex concepts. I must reiterate that these conclusions are based on the presupposition stated at the outset: narratology is, or ought to be conceptualised as, a *discipline*. At this stage this is no more than a provocative thesis intended to focus the debate on the question of principle which, I believe, can no longer be avoided in our reflection on narratology's genesis and prolifera-

tion.—Here, then, is the 'fundamentalist' case which I would like to make.

One: we should learn to appreciate (instead of defending or excusing half-heartedly) the formal and context-free nature of structuralist narratology's fundamental concepts. It is exactly the level of formalisation and abstraction which has made the 'narratological toolkit' so accessible to related disciplines and provided—and still provides—us with interfaces to complex 'philosophical questions.'

Two: Toolkits are sacrosanct. Smuggling a cognitivist, hermeneutic, psychoanalytical or otherwise *-isted, -ized* or *-alled* high-level flexible conceptual spanner into our fundamental 'toolbox' amounts to a breach of the procedural rules that define any discipline—and not just narratology—on the systematic and functional level. Let us take the 'toolkit'-metaphor seriously: trained mechanics don't use shifting spanners; however, they do of course construct and manipulate the most intricate machines by putting together various components. Likewise, conceptual amalgamation and recombination in a scientific discipline can only take place at the level of complex concepts and systems. It would therefore make good sense to identify which of narratology's concepts are elementary non-negotiables, and which aren't.

Three: If narratology is indeed a discipline, then there can by definition be one narratology only. The branching out of disciplines—as it often occurs in the natural sciences: take for example biology which has differentiated into molecular- and microbiology—is normally a result of the pragmatic need to break up an over complex domain of empirical objects into manageable subsets which then constitute separate scientific objects. Most of the 'new narratologies,' however, aim at treating the old object domain with a new amalgamation of concepts and procedures. In other words, they promote narratology's differentiation or reorientation on methodological (if not ideological), and not on empirical or pragmatic grounds. Given this the flags under which they sail might in fact be part of the problem. Instead of labelling them with compound terms that use 'narratology' as a generic term one should perhaps decide to use it as an attribute that refers to the new practice's dominant (if indeed it is domi-

nant!) methodological heritage. Thus it might make better sense to talk of, say, 'Narratological Cognitivism' than of a 'Cognitivist Narratology.'[13]

Four: None of the above advocates turning narratology into a 'closed (work)shop' for hardened structuralists once again. Neither do these observations aim to discredit a critique of narratology's fundamental concepts; on the contrary: this critique is overdue, and, as Meir Sternberg has rightly pointed out, many of our most basic definitions may indeed be far from satisfactory. But this is exactly why one should *not* get carried away with the multitude of applications to which the narratological methodology is now being treated. Narratological fundamentalism, if properly understood, might well help us to discover or create even more powerful conceptual interfaces with other fields of study.

Finally, narratological fundamentalism is by no means an over modest practice. The obverse is true. As Heidegger put it in *Sein und Zeit*: "Das Niveau einer Wissenschaft bestimmt sich daraus, wie weit sie einer Krisis ihrer Grundbegriffe *fähig* ist."—"The standard of a science is dependent on the extent to which it is *capable* of a crisis of its fundamental terms."[14] Seen in this light a systematic reexamination of the basic concepts of narrative theory and narratology might not only result in a better understanding of how 'narratological' the new narratologies in fact are: it might also help to clarify whether narratology is indeed a discipline in its own right—and if not, what else it can or should be.

[13] Nünning in part suggest an alternative convention along the line of the 'X and Narratology'-formula which is of course highly descriptive and transparent, but unfortunately leads to somewhat unwieldy constructs.

[14] Heidegger (1993: 9). My translation (JCM).

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# On the Semiotic Parameters of Narrative: A Critique of Story and Discourse

One of the major achievements of narratology has been to delineate categories for the analysis of stories and to organize them in accordance with various theories in such a way that they both apply to individual works and fit into broader classifications. The process has been enriched by the going-and-coming between the analysis of narratives and theoretical reflection, the one nourishing the other, but it is also a process that bears the marks of historical evolution: the categories of analysis, and their terminology, interact with those of similar or competing theories, producing new paradigms or resulting in revisions of those that already exist. Such development is, of course, the motor of innovation, but it sometimes leads to the congealing of tentative syntheses into standardized procedures and methodologies which, however influential and productive they might be, call for reexamination, even, or sometimes especially, with several years' hindsight[1].

This is the case, I find, with the story/discourse theory of narrative. In what can be regarded as a canonical position of classical narratology, Seymour Chatman stated in 1978 that "each narrative has two parts: a story (*histoire*), the content or chain of events (actions, happenings), plus what may be called the existents (characters, items of setting); and a dis-course (*discours*), that is, the expression, the means by which the content

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[1] I wish to thank Gerald Prince and Malte Stein for their thoughtful reading of this paper and their helpful comments.

is communicated. In simple terms, the story is the *what* in a narrative that is depicted, discourse the *how*"[2]. Few would deny that narratives—or indeed any form of discourse—have their "what" and their "how," whatever the terminological and conceptual mazes lurking beneath the surface of these apparently straightforward terms. In a way, Chatman's definition of the story/discourse theory of narrative comes as a summary of more than ten years of narratological research at a time when the waning of structuralist linguistics, the so-called "pilot science" of narrative theory, had already sparked off a "crisis," resulting in a significant shift in the parameters of narratological research.

As is nearly always the case with research, the story/discourse theory has been paralleled by more or less alternative approaches, one in particular being the so-called ternary model: *histoire* (story), *récit* (narrative), *narration* (narrating)[3]; story, text, narration[4]; fabula, story, text[5,6]. From a somewhat different perspective, David Herman has observed that post-classical narratology—not to be confused with poststructuralism—comprises three overlapping areas of investigation: narrative grammar (following Propp and his successors); narrative poetics (description and classification of the relations between the narrated and the narrative); rhetoric ("the study of the forms of narrative vis-à-vis the audiences of narrative")[7]. In an earlier study, *Universal Grammar and Narrative Form*[8], Herman had taken a cue from Todorov's *Grammaire du Décaméron*[9] by

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2 Chatman (1978: 19).

3 Genette (1980).

4 Rimmon-Kenan (1983).

5 Bal (1997).

6 Michael Toolan (2001: 11–12), among others, has noted that the ternary model involves not so much an adjustment of story and discourse levels as a "bifurcation" of the latter into text (sequence of events, etc.) and narration (relations between the narrator and the narrative).

7 Herman (1999: 7). According to Herman, the transition from classical to post-classical narratology can be dated to an article by David Lodge (1980) which takes stock of three models for narrative that developed during the 1970s: "narratology and narrative grammar"; "poetics of fiction"; "rhetorical analysis." Note can also be taken of an article by Robert Scholes (1980) suggesting the merits for narrative theory of Peirce's "tri-relative" notion of semiosis (comparable to Frege's, Ogden/Richard's and Carnap's theories) as opposed to Saussure's binary theory of the sign.

8 Herman (1995).

*caméron*[9] by adopting the three components of Modistic grammar in order to examine, with reference to Charles Morris (among others), the syntactics, semantics, and pragmatics of narrative. This very brief survey suggests that narratology contained early on elements of a semiotic nature which, while not undermining the idea that narratives in some way comprise content and expression, call into question the story/discourse model or, at the very least, require a disambiguating of the terms story and discourse. Indeed, these matters could well form a crucial portion in a detailed study devoted to the genealogy of narratological concepts. The aim of the present paper, however, is to disentangle the terms and concepts that have contributed to this model. In doing so, we will see that, in order to have a better grasp of the "what" and the "how" of narrative, it is useful, if not necessary, to examine some of the principal ways in which they are subdivided and conceptualized.

The meanings attributed to story and discourse have been conveniently identified in Gerald Prince's *Dictionary of Narratology*:

Story:
1) the content plane of narrative;
2) the *fabula*;
3) a narrative of events with an emphasis on chronology;
4) a causal sequence of events;
5) a linguistic subsystem in which neither sender nor receiver are implied.

Discourse:
1) the expression plane;
2) a linguistic subsystem implying a sender and a receiver[10].

As a starter, it is, of course, useful to single out these meanings, if only to point toward the conceptual disparities between the two terms, as can be seen, for example, from the absence in discourse of any counterpart under story to item 2 (*fabula*), item 3 (a narrative of events with an emphasis on chronology) and item 4 (a causal sequence of events). To offset this imbalance and get a somewhat more complete picture, we need to turn to another entry:

9 Todorov (1969).
10 Prince (1987: 21, 91).

Plot:

1) the main incidents of a narrative (as opposed to character and theme);
2) the arrangement of incidents (*muthos, sjuzhet*);
3) the global dynamic organization of narrative constituents responsible for the thematic interest of a narrative;
4) plot as defined by Forster[11].

In this entry, item 2 (arrangement of incidents) and item 4 (Forster's plot) have their counterparts in story but do not form part of discourse. In practice, then, it seems that the passage of the terms "story" and "discourse" into current narratological usage marks an uneasy and somewhat reductive synthesis of concepts that are not wholly assimilable into one another and that, in some cases, pertain to divergent approaches to narrative theory and analysis. When cast against the backdrop of Prince's lexicological treatment of the terms, it can be seen that a story/discourse model of narrative such as Chatman's is a structuralist theory that seeks to incorporate prestructuralist concepts, but also certain linguistic and semiotic categories.

## 1. Pre-structuralist

In its best-known version, outlined by Boris Tomashevsky, the *fabula/sjuzhet* principle distinguishes between "the aggregate of mutually related events reported in the work" ("the action itself") and "the same events, but [...] *arranged* and connected according to the orderly sequence in which they were presented in the work" ("how the reader learns of the action"). The *fabula* is composed of irreducible thematic elements, or motifs, each containing a predicate, some of these motifs being bound together "in their logical, causal-chronological order" such that they cannot be eliminated without upsetting the whole of the narrative, others being free[12].

Wolf Schmid has observed that the core meaning of *fabula* is "material for formation of the *sjuzhet*" ("Material der Sujetformung") and that of *sjuzhet* "formation of the *fabula* material" ("Formung des Fabelmateri-

[11] Prince (1987: 71–72).
[12] Tomashevsky (1965: 66–68).

als”), resulting in an inherent semantic and esthetic reductionism[13]. It has also been shown that, among Slavic scholars, the Formalist dichotomy has been dealt with in ways that have little to do with the story/discourse model of classical narratology[14]. A case in point is Lubomír Dolezel’s “stratificational” model which subdivides *fabula* into motifemes (logical structures in propositional form representing classes of texts independent of any textual manifestation) and motifs (organization of the content of individual narratives with an extensional structure), while *sjuzhet* is a “texture” (the wording of narratives as they appear in texts)[15].

Story, says E. M. Forster, is “a narrative of events arranged in their time-sequence” (“The king died and then the queen died”); “a plot is also a narrative of events, the emphasis falling on causality” (“The king died, and then the queen died of grief”)[16]. For the unwary, this well-known pair might appear to be synonymous with *fabula/sjuzhet*, the risk of confusion in no way being alleviated by the lack of satisfactory English equivalents for the Russian words, which are commonly rendered “story” and “plot” (cf. Reis and Lemon’s translation of Tomashevsky’s article; Erlich[17] gives “fable” and “plot”).

Meir Sternberg[18] is one of the few to maintain that the two sets of concepts have different modes of existence and that they are neither interchangeable nor mutually exclusive, but complementary. He points out that *sjuzhet* is the actual text as given, a largely antichronological rearrangement of motifs to be reconstituted through a process of abstraction in their “objective” order as they appear in the *fabula*. Neither story nor plot, however, is primarily concerned with motifs or their (re-)ordering, but with the nature of linkages: temporal or causal. Both story and *fabula* are thus abstractive, reconstitutive and indispensable to narrative. However, plot, unlike *sjuzhet*, is abstractive and can be (and in actual texts sometimes is) dispensed with; *sjuzhet*, which is indispensable, can include a variety of linkages—temporal, causal, visual or other. For Sternberg, *sjuzhet* is thus akin to the Aristotelian *muthos*, that is, the “arrangement or structure of incidents” (*sunthesin tôn pragmatôn* [*Poetics* 1450a]). As Er-

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[13] Schmid (1982: 83, 87).
[14] Volek (1977: 155ff.).
[15] Dolezel (1972); cf. (1998: 33–36).
[16] Forster (1962: 93).
[17] Erlich (1965: 240–42).
[18] Sternberg (1978: 8–14).

lich (1965: 242) has noted, however, *sjuzhet* is characterized mainly by its temporal displacements of *fabula* and is thus a somewhat looser concept than *muthos*. This being the case, it is understandable that Volek (1977: 147) takes nearly the opposite view from Sternberg, observing that Forster's plot, in conjoining "why" with "and then," comes closer to the systematic character of the Formalist *fabula* than it does to *sjuzhet*: for him, it is plot and *fabula* (but not *sjuzhet*) that can be likened to Aristotle's *muthos*.

Combining the two pairs of terms, Sternberg goes on to propose an eight-term typology based on their intersection[19]. The important point for us, however, is that, in view of the technical senses of the four terms, any conflation of the two pairs of binary terms into a single binary pair tends to mask significant conceptual differences between them.

## 2. Structuralist

The story/discourse model incorporates structuralist principles through the adoption of Claude Bremond's *raconté/racontant* and Tzvetan Todorov's *histoire/discours*.

With reference to Propp's morphological model, Bremond focuses on "an autonomous layer of meaning, provided with a structure that can be isolated from the whole of the message: the *narrative*." The narrative (*récit*), without which there cannot be a "narrative message," tells (*raconte*) a story (*histoire*) that possesses a structure "independent of the techniques by which it is taken over." It is further specified that "[t]he *raconté* has its own signifiers, its *racontants*: these are not words, images or gestures, but the events, situations and behaviors signified by these words, these images, these gestures"[20].

Bremond's *raconté/racontant* is an obvious evocation of Saussure's *signifié/signifiant*, but one that calls for qualification. Different media

[19] For example, picaresque novels form a "story-type sujet" whereas the reconstituted pattern of stream-of-consciousness novels constitute a "story-like fabula."

[20] Bremond (1973: 11–12): "une couche de signification autonome, dotée d'une structure qui peut être isolée de l'ensemble du message: le *récit* […] [La structure de l'histoire] est indépendante des techniques qui la prennent en charge […] Le *raconté* a ses signifiants propres, ses *racontants*: ceux-ci ne sont pas des mots, des images ou des gestes, mais les événements, les situations et les conduites signifiés par ces mots, ces images, ces gestes."

(words, images, gestures) can convey the same story. Story, however, is not assimilable to the linguistic signified, since the events, situations and behaviors of the story constitute the properly *narrative signifiers* of the *récit*, i.e. *racontants*; nor is the *raconté* a signified in the linguistic sense, but the properly *narrative signified* of the *récit*, i.e. a structure of functions. Moreover, in order for narrative as an isolated layer of meaning to become communicable, it must be taken over by techniques which, in turn, employ a given system of signs[21]. In effect, then, Bremond's model is a four-level "interlocking" system which subdivides Propp's *fabula* into *raconté/racontant*, while the techniques through which this "autonomous structure" is conveyed (cf. *sjuzhet*) employ the signifieds and signifiers of particular media: hence, a sign system acts as the signifier of narrative techniques (the "signifieds" of that of that system) which, in turn, overlap with the *racontants* that serve as the signifiers of the *racontés.* Indeed, Bremond[22] does insist on the division between "the laws that govern the narrated universe" and "analysis of the techniques of narration," but to ignore the subdivision of the two sectors can result in misleadingly positing *raconté/racontant* as the transposition of the linguistic *signifié/signifiant* onto narrative categories.

In his story/discourse model, Chatman has not overlooked this dual distinction, but the terminology employed largely neutralizes it. Noting that *raconté* (translated as "that which is narrated") and *racontant* ("story-elements") incorporate the same distinctions as *fabula* and *sjuzhet*[23], he goes on to state that "[t]he *signifiés* or signifieds of narrative are exactly three—event, character, and detail of setting; the *signifiants* or signifiers are those elements in the narrative statement (whatever the medium) that can stand for one of these three [...]"[24]. Here, four levels are delineated

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[21] "[T]he narrative, although existing as an autonomous signifying structure, is communicable only on condition that it is relayed by a narrative technique, this technique using the system of signs which is appropriate to it. In other words, the signifying elements of the narrative (the *racontants*) become the signifieds of the technique by which they are taken over." ("[L]e récit, bien qu'existant comme structure signifiante autonome, n'est communicable que sous condition d'être relayé par une technique de récit, celle-ci utilisant le système de signes qui lui est propre. C'est dire que les éléments signifiants du récit (les racontants) deviennent les signifiés de la technique qui les prend en charge" (ibid.: 46).

[22] Bremond (1966: 60).

[23] Chatman (1978: 20).

[24] Ibid.: 25.

(signifieds, signifiers, narrative statement, medium), but this is done in such a way that in place of *racontés* and *racontants*, we find *signifiés* in a sense close to Bremond's *racontants* (events, situations, behaviors) and *signifiants* in a sense that is barely distinguishable from Bremond's "techniques". Although in principle, story and discourse have each been subdivided, the result of the slight shifts in terminology and their accompanying concepts is that story and discourse, along with *raconté*/*racontant* and *fabula/sjuzhet*, are effectively assimilated into signified and signifier.

The immediate terminological predecessor of the story/discourse model is *histoire* and *discours*, a pair that in fact covers two sets of categories.

Originally, *histoire/discours* was proposed by Émile Benveniste to distinguish, through the use of pronouns, deictics and verbal systems, between two modes of enunciation (*énonciation*) in the French language: briefly stated, *histoire* consists in third-person enunciations that exclude "autobiographical" forms while *discours*, in the first and second persons, includes "all enunciations which assume a speaker and a hearer, the first intending to influence the other in some way"[25].

Responses to Benveniste's work have been various, and its application to literature has been prolific, although not unproblematic, particularly as regards the relative positions of *histoire* and *discours* in actual texts. Harald Weinrich[26], for example, in his carefully-elaborated development of Benveniste's thesis, integrated it into text linguistics, but with the conclusion that, due to the particularities of the verbal system of the Romance languages, it does not readily extend to other languages. In a way not to be confused with the story/discourse theory of narrative, Ann Banfield[27], adopted Benveniste's distinction within the context of narrative style in order to study represented speech and thought (with particular reference to free indirect speech), discursive forms which, unlike direct speech, are noncommunicative; she also renames *histoire* "narration," maintaining that Benveniste's *histoire/discours* is complementary, but not equivalent,

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[25] Benveniste (1966: 242): "toute énonciation supposant un locuteur et un auditeur, et chez le premier l'intention d'influencer l'autre en quelque manière."
[26] Weinrich (1971).
[27] Banfield (1982: 141ff. and passim).

to Käte Hamburger's *fiktionales Erzählen* vs. *Aussage*[28]. In contrast, some currents of recent French narratology, influenced by the development of enunciative linguistics, have reformulated earlier theories of point of view and focalization[29], but also of reported speech and techniques of access to character consciousness[30], and they have done so in ways that significantly revise Benveniste's position by preserving (in revised form) the roles of enunciator and enunciatee.

In its second sense, *histoire/discours* derives from Tzvetan Todorov's (1966) proposal to replace the Formalist terms with the terms introduced by Benveniste, effectively announcing the "profound unity" between language and narrative that was later put forth as forming the basis of narratology[31]. Narrative as *histoire* (unlike *fabula*—a "preliterary material") is a rhetorical *inventio*, a "convention," an "abstraction" that does "not exist 'in itself,'" comprising a logic of actions plus characters and their relations and thus forming the *langue* of narrative. Narrative as *discours*, a rhetorical *dispositio*, but also the *parole* of the individual work, includes the narrative devices of time, aspects (or visions) and modes. The main contribution of these structuralist terms is to have expanded *fabula* beyond a series of actions to include the continuum of the narrated world ("diegesis," in Genette's terms, as opposed to actions) and *sjuzhet* beyond the redistribution of events to include all aspects of textual mediation[32].

All in all, however, it is a misleading choice of words that has led, firstly, to likening *histoire* and *discours*, a linguistic theory of the modes of enunciation and communicative situations, with language as system (*langue*) and language as process (*parole*) and, secondly, to superimposing these same terms onto, respectively, narrative content and its signifying medium. Todorov himself is equivocal on this point, stating that the "modes of presentation" of narrative ("representation," or characters' speech, and "narration," or narrator's speech) occur "at a more concrete level" than *histoire/discours* as alternatives to *fabula/sjuzhet*[33], which hardly clarifies the English-language story/discourse approach. It is also

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[28] Banfield's controversial thesis has been systematically reworked within a narratological framework by Monika Fludernik (1993).
[29] Rabatel (1997), (1998).
[30] Rivara (2000).
[31] Todorov (1969: 27).
[32] Cf. Martínez/Scheffel (1999: 23).
[33] Todorov (1966: 144).

notable that, in Todorov's version, the features attributed to story and plot are not distributed between *histoire* and *discours*, but are necessarily included within the structure of *histoire* and that, in any case, the author subsequently developed a narrative grammar, replacing *histoire* with "semantic aspect" (*inventio*) and "syntactic aspect" (*dispositio*) and *discours* with "verbal aspect" (*elocutio*) (1969), calling, several years later, for a logical analysis in place of a grammatical analysis[34].

With his narrative grammar, Todorov in fact evolves toward a ternary theory, confirming what has been the undercurrent of the present discussion, namely, that binary models of narrative, when carefully worked out, ultimately subdivide the "what" and/or "how" of narrative in various, even if in sometimes problematical, ways[35]. The story/discourse approach, however, by assimilating *fabula/sjuzhet*, story/plot, *raconté/racontant* and *histoire/discours* into one another, tends to underrate or even to eliminate valuable distinctions in what seems to have left a particular mark on English-language narratology, born largely out of the encounter between point-of-view theories and European structuralism[36]. This is surprisingly true even of approaches to narrative that seek to free themselves of structuralist binarisms, as in the introduction to a recent reader that rejects the "false opposition between 'story' and 'narrative'" (*sic*), adopting an ap-

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[34] Todorov (1973: 87).

[35] Ternary theories are sometimes considered to be fundamentally binary, as Bal (1977: 6) has suggested of Genette. After correctly observing the ambiguity in Genette's narrative (*récit*), defined both as signifier and enunciate (*énoncé*—given as "statement" in the English translation of Genette's book), she goes on to point out that narration corresponds to narrative enunciation (*énonciation*), the enunciate being, in linguistic theory, the result of enunciation, or an act of utterance. Disregarding the latter aspect of narrative (*récit*), she concludes that Genette only distinguishes between the two levels of Russian Formalism. Even though Genette (1999 [1986]: 330) does maintain that the narratology of fictional texts is linked to comparison of the narrative text with story, he has also reiterated the importance of narration alongside narrative and story (Genette 1988 [1983]: 10ff.), so that the story/discourse dichotomy cannot, in my opinion, be attributed to Genette (cf. Fludernik 1996: 334).

[36] In this regard, it is noteworthy that the first half of Chatman's book is devoted to the events and existents of story and that the second half, with reference to Genette's adoption of Plato's *mimésis* and *diégésis*, divides discourse into "nonnarrated stories" (unmediated transmission) and "covert versus overt narrators" (mediated transmission) (cf. 1978: 46), limiting discourse mainly to a discussion of point of view and to what in effect is Todorov's "modes or representation" or Genette's "narrative of events" vs. "narrative of words" and their various permutations.

parently liberating definition of narrative as "any minimal linguistic (written or verbal) act"[37] only to revert, in the glossary, to the very equivalencies that this definition supposedly overcomes: story is "a synonym for *histoire* or *fabula*"; discourse is "equivalent" to *récit*, *sjuzhet*, *plot*, *muthos*[38].

## 3. Semiotic

Prince's definitions of story and discourse show that these terms cover a variety of concepts, and we have also seen evidence that well-developed theories which incorporate this pair tend, more or less explicitly, to further break it down into constituent categories. In this regard, note can be taken of a lucid encyclopedia entry by Prince, which outlines the principle contributions of classical narratology, discussing narrative grammars from Propp to Barthes' "Introduction" under the heading "Story" and, under "Discourse," Genette. It is noteworthy that, in concluding, the author calls for a more integrated approach with a "narrative grammar proper," consisting in a syntactic component ("a finite number of rules for generat[ing] the macro- and microstructures of all and only stories"), a semantic component interpreting these structures, a "discoursive" component (order of presentation, speed, frequency, etc.) and a pragmatic component ("specifying the basic cognitive and communicative factors affecting the production, processing, and narrativity of the output of the first three parts"), these four parts being articulated with a textual component, i.e. a given medium[39]. This schema resembles Todorov's narrative grammar to the extent that it includes a syntactic component and a semantic component; but unlike the verbal aspect, it provides for a discoursive component (cf. *sjuzhet*) distinct from a textual component, while it also introduces a pragmatic component which is absent from Todorov's system: interestingly, no explicit reference is made in Prince's narrative grammar to the terms included in the story/discourse model. Does this mean that semiotically-oriented theories of narrative have discarded these terms?

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[37] McQuillan (2000: 6–7).
[38] Ibid.: 317ff.
[39] Prince (1995: 125).

To answer this question, it will be useful to refer to Martínez and Scheffel's comparative table of the basic narratological terms of nineteen theoreticians from Propp to Schmid, classifying them under *Handlung* (action) and *Darstellung* (presentation). The first comprises *Ereignis* (event) (or *Motiv*), *Geschehen* (e.g., Forster's "story"), *Geschichte* ("plot"), and *Handlungsschema* (abstracted global schema of plots forming groups of texts), while the second is broken down into *Erzählung* (cf. Tomashevsky's *sjuzhet*) and *Erzählen* (presentation of the plot in various languages or media)[40]. Needless to say, this table is not intended to outline a narrative model or theory, but by adopting terms for its classification more general than the terminology employed by any of the theories it includes, the table does allow for a useful overview, making it possible to bring out a number of parallels and differences among these systems as well as inconsistencies and disparities of terminology.

Of particular interest among these systems in the present context is Schmid's four-level model. Noting that the structuralist *histoire/discours* partially resolves the Formalists' failure to account for the constitution of narrative texts, the author goes on to propose a *fabula/histoire* and a *sjuzhet/discours*. The first is subdivided into *Geschehen* (characters, situations and actions forming "the fictional raw material of narrative processing"—a literary *inventio*) and *Geschichte* (result of selection, concretization and segmentation—a *dispositio* in *ordo naturalis*), while the second is broken down into *Erzählung* (result of composition through linearization, temporal acceleration/deceleration and permutation of segments—an *ordo artificialis*) and *Präsentation der Erzählung* (result of *elocutio*, verbalization—the pheno-level as opposed to the previous three geno-levels). These levels, arranged vertically, can be viewed from both an "ideal-genetic" perspective (the model isolates non-temporal levels of transformation, but corresponds to the creation and reception of no actual work) and a "semiotic" perspective, functioning in the opposite direction and focusing on the constitution of sense or meaning through a series of denotations and implications in the passage from level four to level one[41].

This layout contrasts significantly with Sternberg's system of *story, fabula, plot, sjuzhet* in that these terms designate "complementary" aspects of narrative, forming the basis of an eight-term typology, and are

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[40] Martínez/Scheffel (1999: 25–26).

[41] Schmid (1982: 94–98).

not ordered into levels either genetically or semiotically. It also bears comparison with Bremond's "interlocking" system which, in effect, subdivides *fabula* and *sjuzhet*: not unlike Bremond, Schmid considers *Präsentation der Erzählung* to be the signifier of *Erzählung* as signified which, in turn, is the signifier of *Geschichte* as signified, itself the signifier of *Geschehen* as signified. In practice, however, Bremond concentrates almost exclusively on isolating the *raconté/racontant*, whereas Schmid is more concerned with the interactions between *fabula/histoire* and *sjuzhet/discours* and their respective subdivisions.

Approaching narrative through four constitutive levels or components opens up a significant perspective for narratology. Referring back to Prince's *Dictionary*, we see that among the meanings attributed to story is the "content plane" and among those attributed to discourse is the "expression plane," each plane further subdivided into substance and form intersecting in a tabular fashion. Chatman also refers to these two planes, pointing out, however, that his theory is concerned with the form of narrative content and expression (story components plus structure of narrative transmission), rather than with the substance of narrative (representations of objects and actions plus media)[42], so that, as noted above, he does not in the end adopt Hjelmslev's refinements of Saussure, but remains within a largely Saussurean context. His story/discourse theory thus points in the direction of Hjelmslev's content and expression planes, but does not fully integrate its essential distinctions, while Schmid's four levels, without reference to Hjelmslev, in a sense comes closer to this system, with *Geschehen* and *Präsentation der Erzählung* forming the substance, respectively, of content and expression, and *Geschichte* and *Erzählung* their form.

I would like now to shift the emphasis somewhat by turning to Umberto Eco's textual semiotics, which incorporates *fabula* and *sjuzhet* in a way that reflects content plane/expression plane, doing so, however, within a Peircean framework. Eco's writings in this area are extensive, and for present purposes I will therefore comment only on two interrelated aspects of his textual semiotics: 1) the inferential nature of the sign and the importance of abduction in semiosis; 2) the model of textual communication, which marks a change from the binary to the triadic conception of the sign. The Hjelmslevian perspective, we have seen, serves to

[42] Chatman (1978: 24).

disambiguate the story/discourse model, flawed by the polysemous nature of its terminology, while Eco's approach to abduction and textual communication opens narratology up to the question of semiosis.

Classical narratology, based on the dyadic categories of Saussurean linguistics, adopted a conventionalist notion of the sign: thanks to a code, a correlation is established between content and expression such that "*p* is equivalent to *q*." For Eco, however, the history of semiotics shows that only in a codified form can signs be regarded as identities or equalities, that signs in their dynamic dimension (or, following Hjelmslev, sign-functions[43]) result from inference: "if *p* then *q*." The consequences of this inferential conception of the sign are myriad and far-reaching, including for narratology, for while linguistic theory tends to favor a model of equivalence ("*p* is *q*"), a broader understanding of the sign suggests that signs are a matter of interpretation rather than recognition: "A sign," says Eco, "is not only something which stands for something else: it is also something that must be interpreted"[44]; or as Peirce, quoted in this connection by Eco, puts it: "A sign is something by which we know something more"[45]; and from a narratological perspective: "story and plot are not functions of language but structures that can nearly always be translated into another semiotic system"[46].

Framing the two basic dimensions of narrative in terms of the translatability between semiotic systems rather than in analogy with signified and signifier constitutes an epistemological reorientation of considerable significance for narratology. When narrative is viewed in terms of semiotic functions, for example, it calls for a reexamination of a narrative grammar

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43 Cf. Eco (1976: 49), (1988: 119ff.).

44 Eco (1984: 46).

45 Peirce (1931 [*C.P.*]: 8.332, quoted in ibid.: 26).

46 Eco (1994: 35). Note that although Eco uses Forster's terms interchangeably with the Russian Formalist terms, he remains conceptually closer to the latter: "The *fabula* is the basic story stuff, the logic of actions or the syntax of characters, the time-oriented course of events"; "The plot [*sjuzhet*] is the story as actually told, along with all deviations, digressions, flashbacks, and the whole of the verbal devices" (1979: 27). However, as rightly pointed out by Malte Stein in a personal communication, the Formalist *fabula* is an unordered and formless matter without artistic value, the reader's attention being directed toward the *sjuzhet* in what is essentially a theory of text production, whereas for Eco, *fabula* results from a complex process of reconstruction and is thus a structured product of reading and interpretation, *sjuzhet* being an intermediate step in this process of text reception.

based on "a profound unity between language and narrative," as advocated by Todorov (1969: 27), while the inferential nature of the sign represents a powerful alternative in narrative studies to the idea that textual manifestation "stands for" narrative content—an alternative explored in detail in *The Role of the Reader*. In his various writings devoted to inference, Eco adopts the three types of inference that form the basis of Peirce's logic and that are also necessary and sufficient elements for defining the sign: deduction, abduction (or hypothesis), induction. Unlike Peirce, however, who places inferences within a context of scientific verifiability, Eco adapts inferences, calling them abductions, to a theory of cultural representation, where they both serve as a mechanism for interpretation and operate within a textual semiotics[47].

*Overcoded abductions* are (semi-) automatic laws resembling deductions to the extent that they proceed with inferences from general laws to particular cases in a mechanical way. They also involve hypotheses in that, for instance, to know whether the graphemes 't,' 'a,' 'b,' 'l,' 'e' are pronounced /teibl/ or /tabl/, I must decide, possibly on the basis of circumstantial evidence, whether these graphemes pertain to the English language or to the French language: in such examples, overcoding frequently occurs, since context of utterance and cotext render the decision nearly automatic. In literary texts, overcoding results from genre, style, and rhetoric, but can also be found in the structure of narrative functions identified by Propp, in actantial structures and in frames. Here, type and token come into play so that, according to Eco, "[a] story actualizes pre-overcoded narrative functions, that is, intertextual frames"[48].

*Undercoded abductions* (or abductions *stricto sensu*) come into play in the absence of reliable predictable rules, and they involve the selection of the most plausible alternative that can be entertained, moving from an inference to a probable rule. This is the case when a series of disconnected data are joined together to form a coherent sequence, or when the identification of a topic brings out the "aboutness" of a text. "Is *Oedipus Rex*," asks Eco, "the story of detection, incest, or parricide?"[49]. To answer such

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[47] The following comments are based mainly on Eco (1976: 129–36), (1979: 17ff.), (1984: 39–43), (1988: 48–53), (1990: 64–82, 152–60), (1994: 156–60); see also Thagard (1978); Bonfantini/Proni (1983); Schillemans (1992); Ayim (1994); Manetti (2000).

[48] Eco (1979: 35).

[49] Eco (1979: 28).

a question, it is necessary to take an "inferential walk" outside the text in search of previously actualized frames, an operation likened to passing from a definition contained in the dictionary to the text-oriented world knowledge embraced by the encyclopedia. Verisimilitude is another product of undercoded abductions, as when we infer from Forster's mini-story "The king died and then the queen died" that the queen died of grief. In contradistinction with the notion of textual immanence, it is the back-and-forth movement between overcoded and undercoded abductions, between the "ready-made" and the merely plausible, that allows for construction of the *fabula.*

*Creative abductions*, like undercoded abductions, resemble abduction in Peirce, but they involve the invention of new rules and thus operate as a conjecture or a bet against the odds when no plausible inference is available. Creative abductions may challenge existing scientific and ideological paradigms, and they also enter into the process by which a detective uncovers the facts. Unlike overcoded and undercoded abductions, however, which rely on preexisting and pretested explanations, creative abductions are closely linked with Peirce's induction—the testing of hypotheses—or what Eco calls "meta-abduction": to what degree do new inductions coincide with world knowledge and experience? To answer such a question, the encyclopedia is resorted to through a process of meta-abductive reasoning, and it is employed when, for instance, possible worlds are confronted with the "real" world.

It is frequently recognized that one of the meaningful aspects of Eco's textual semiotics is that it is marked by the transition from a dyadic to a triadic conception of the sign. This is due in part to the syllogistic nature of Peirce's inferential logic which, at the level of the sign, results in the incorporation of the interpretant[50] into semiosic processes, the interpretant being, for Eco, the cornerstone of interpretation and of the Model Reader. The centrality of interpretation in Eco's semiotics is reflected in his model of textual communication, as developed particularly in *The Role of the Reader* and summarized in figure 1.

[50] "A sign addresses somebody, that is, creates in the mind of that person an equivalent sign, or perhaps a more developed sign. That sign which it creates I call the *interpretant* of the first sign" Peirce (1931 [*C.P.*]: 2.228).

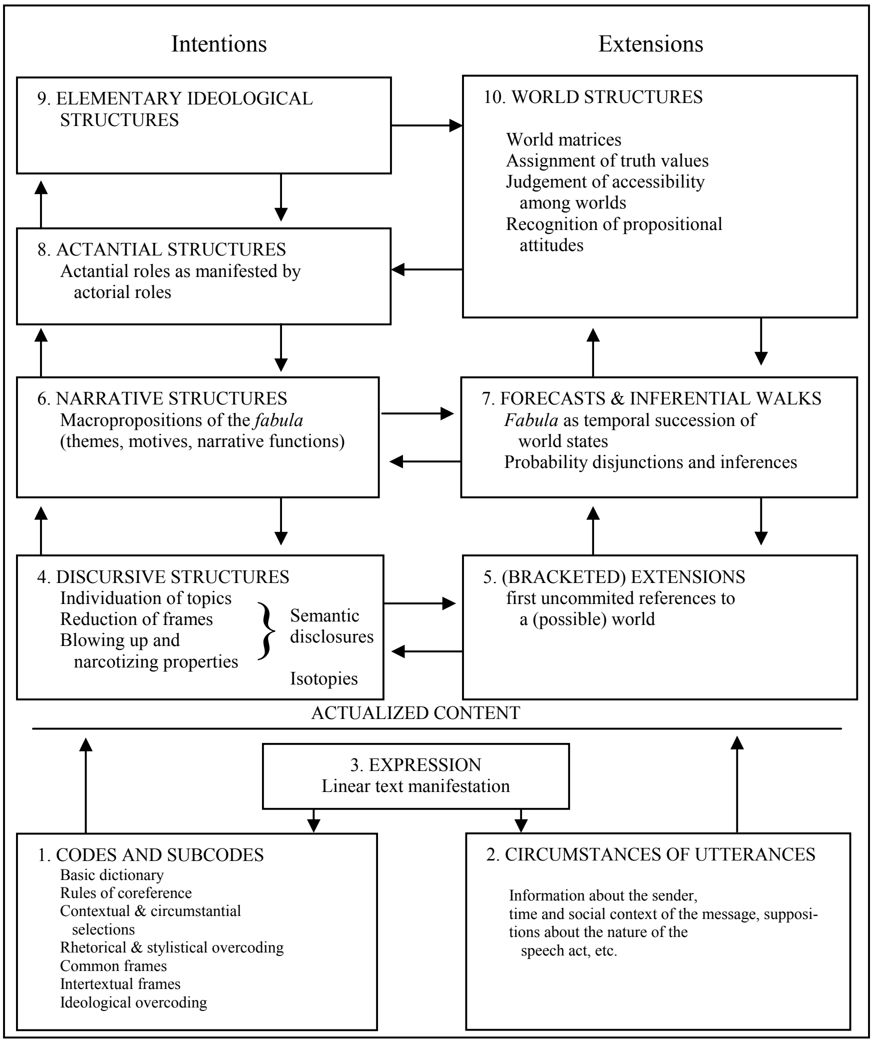



Figure 1: Eco's model of textual communication.
Source: Eco (1979: 14).

I do not propose to give a detailed commentary on this figure or to compare it with Jakobson's well-known model of verbal communication (which would require a separate study), but only to draw attention to two of its features that have extensive consequences for the conceptual status of narrative categories in general and that offer considerable potential for

overcoming the problematic nature of the polysemous story/discourse synthesis:

1) Eco's Peircean revision of Hjelmslev's content and expression; 2) intension and extension[51].

It is important to bear in mind that Eco does not consider Hjelmslev's structuralist perspective, which leaves communication out of account, to be incompatible with Peirce's cognitive-interpretive perspective, but that the two perspectives are in fact complementary. This explains why the figure refers to "actualized content," which can be glossed "content actualized in communication." When Hjelmslev subdivides content and expression each into substance and form, he treats the substance of content and that of expression as two distinct continua, and at the same time he remains unclear as to how substance differs from presemiotic or semiotically unstructured matter (purport). Eco, who includes the problem of reference in his semiotics, proposes to resolve this difficulty by adopting the object in Peircean semiotics, and more particularly the dynamic object as opposed to the immediate object. The dynamic object (which "by some means contrives to determine the sign to its representation") is presemiotic in that it remains external to the sign, while the immediate object ("the object as the sign itself represents it, and whose Being is thus dependent upon the Representation of it in the sign") is "within the sign"[52]. The relation between the two types of object is thus one of selection of pertinent attributes, the immediate object being the way in which the dynamic object is focused in the sign-vehicle, and it involves, as Eco puts it, the "further segmentation of the continuum"[53]. The dynamic object ("the object of which a sign is a sign") is extra-semiotic, "a state of the outer world" (the Italian version of this book also speaks of a "class of possible experiences" and "the world as possible experience"[54]) and consequently, the immediate object ("the *object of a sign*") is "a mere object of the inner world" and thus a "semiotic construction"[55].

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[51] The following remarks are made mostly in reference to Eco (1976: 48-58, 268–70), (1979: 3–43), (1984: 33–36, 44ff.), (1988: 119–35); see also Dolezel (1997); Caesar (1999: 83–86, 120–34); Violi (2000).

[52] Peirce (1931 [*C.P.*]: 4.536); quoted in Eco (1979: 181).

[53] Eco (1976: 269).

[54] Cf. Violi (2000: 31).

[55] Eco (1979: 193).

It is fairly obvious from the figure that actualized content coincides with the immediate object. The dynamic object (Hjelmslev's continuum or matter) is not represented here and in fact cannot be and need not be, since it is knowable only through the articulations of textual sign-functions. As for expression, it can employ various portions of the continuum, segmenting it in different ways (e.g., the visual representation of an object as opposed to a verbal description of the same object). Referring back to the story/discourse model, we can see that it includes no distinction comparable to that between dynamic object and immediate object: Chatman's evocation of the substance and form of content and of expression remains indeterminate with regard to the presemiotic continuum, and it ultimately comes down to equating events and existents with the signified and the medium with the signifier that "stands for" them[56]. Eco's model, based on an inferential conception of the sign, is oriented toward the abductive operations by which content is actualized (as the various boxes in the figure attempt to chart out), and it thus stands in stark contrast with the dyadic equivalences of the story/discourse approach.

Not only does the model incorporate the immediate object into content, but it also includes intensions and extensions, doing so in place of denotation and connotation in Hjelmslev's semiotics. In *A Theory of Semiotics*, Eco studied denotation and connotation in terms of cultural codes (e.g., an electronic signal "denotes" a certain level of water in a dam and "connotes" danger). Later, however, he became more attached to the relations between signification and truth conditions or, roughly speaking, intension and extension, the terms frequently used in conjunction with the logical and semantic theories of Frege, Russell, Carnap, etc., although Eco's immediate source for these terms is Petöfi's Text-Structure-World-Structure-Theory. It may be an oversimplification to state that structuralist narratologies concern only the "intensions" side of the figure, but it is true that such theories tend not to venture into "extensions," and the interest of Eco's figure is to provide in graphic form a semiotic account of referentiality in narrative communication which includes an encyclopedia model of semantics with a strong pragmatic element. Here again, abductive processes are the key to the relations between the various

[56] It must also be objected that, in semiotic theory, the signifier does not "stand for" the signified; it is, rather, the sign that stands for something to somebody in some respect or capacity, as Peirce would have it.

boxes (which Eco is careful not to confuse with the "levels" of many narrative theories), with overcoded abductions being prominent vertically and undercoded, creative, and meta-abductions tending to come into play horizontally. A look at the intensions side, for example, suggests that discursive structures (4) are overcoded by codes and subcodes (1) and by narrative structures (6). Plot, which coincides more or less with discursive structures (4), results from a tentative synthesis by the reader, thus involving undercoded abductions or, in "open" texts, creative abductions, while the movement toward bracketed extensions (5) engages a process of meta-abductions, the "testing" of hypotheses. A similar process takes place at the more abstract level of narrative structures (6) and forecasts and inferential walks (7) with the mapping of macropropositions onto world states.

Expression, or linear text manifestation, is dependent on codes and subcodes (i.e. presupposed knowledge), which are included among intensions, and it is also subject to circumstances of utterance (or pragmatic conditions), included among extensions. For Eco, then, expression is linked to pragmatic categories, rather than to the division into substance and form, and it therefore functions in conjunction with the semantic intensions and extensions of actualized content.

The replacement of the substance and form of expression and content by pragmatic and semantic categories reflects the intersection of the Hjelmslevian and the Peircean perspectives in the model of textual communication, and it also results from an attempt to reconcile two fundamental orientations in sign theory, namely, signification (corresponding roughly to binary theories of the sign) and communication (triadic theories). Furthermore, as can be seen from the figure, the four major components of textual communication are not arranged into the "vertical" levels of some theories (cf. Schmid) or into the tabular form presupposed by Chatman's appropriation of content and expression and their subdivisions. Nor do these components follow the "horizontal" arrangement of the sender-receiver models, inspired by theories of information, that have been adopted by numerous narratologists. Such a model is taken over by Chatman (1978: 267) in his diagram of narrative structure, which includes real author/reader, implied author/reader and mediated transmission (narrator to narratee) as opposed to unmediated transmission ("no" or minimal narrator); at the same time, however, this diagram reveals a shift away from the tabular configuration of Hjelmslev's expression and content and their subdivisions. By contrast, neither Schmid's nor Eco's systems incorporate sender-receiver theories of communication. Schmid's four-level

system, we have seen, has both an "ideal-genetic" or transformational dimension and a "semiotic" dimension of sense and meaning, and it is also oriented toward the production of narrative texts. Eco's textual communication, due to its connection with inferential reasoning and the triadic conception of the sign in Peircean semiotics and the importance of the interpretant, accentuates textually regulated interpretive acts carried out by the recipient, or the Model Reader, but it does not address such traditional concerns of narratology as time, focalization, representation of character/narrator discourse or reliable/unreliable narration.

The terms story and discourse form part of the landscape of discussions about narrative and to reject them, whatever the difficulties brought about by their use, would be as pointless as to propose fresh new definitions of them. What is more important, as I have attempted to show here, is to identify, not only how story and discourse have been associated with similar terms and concepts, but also the ways they are appropriated by and operate within various narrative theories. At the least, this can perhaps help to avoid some of the pitfalls of facile and ready-made syntheses inherited from several decades of narratological studies. At best, this inquiry into the two major dimensions of narrative, together with their semiotic parameters, can serve to enlarge the horizons of narrative research.

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# Realism as a Poetics of Observation. The Function of Narrative Perspective in the Classic French Novel: Flaubert—Stendhal—Balzac

Forty years after Franz Stanzel's pioneering study, critics are generally agreed that figural narration is one of the defining features of realistic narration. Indeed, the connection between this kind of narrative technique and realist poetics would seem to be inherent in the realist programme itself, for figural narration (the description of events as seen by a third-person character) ensures the fulfilment of a requirement practically indispensable for a poetics which sets itself the task of faithfully reproducing reality: the requirement of objectivity. A report is made more reliable—more objective—if it is delivered not from the position of an omniscient narrator who describes and comments on events from his subjective standpoint, but from a point of view which is located inside events and the characters involved in them[1]. However, while few would deny that a restrictive device of this kind creates what Jurij Lotman calls an *effet de réel*, it is more difficult to argue that the technique of narrative perspective is confined to the theoretical programme of realism as under-

[1] Cf. Stanzel (1964: 39f.): "Yet only during the nineteenth century do we find a growing number of critical voices declaring that the novel should strive to produce the same impression of objectivity, of impersonality, as is created by the dramatic process. In order for the novel to meet these demands, it had to abandon authorial narrators who shape and comment on events in a highly personal (i.e. subjective) way from a superior, even omniscient, position" (original version German).

stood in this sense. The fact is that at least one aspect of figural narration is an inherent marker of fictionality itself: it relies on the narrator having insight into one of the characters involved in the narrative. Asserting the ability to access the internal psyche of another human being, however, clearly contradicts all accepted ideas of what is realistically possible and implies fictionality for this very reason. In this respect, the figural narrative situation is not absolutely distinct from the authorial narrative situation but actually shares a constitutive structural premise with it.

Furthermore, if we examine matters more closely, it becomes clear that it is misleading to assume even that figural narration is an integral part of a realist programme that is committed to the doctrine of objective representation. The requirements of a perspective that is "realistic" in this sense of the word are only met fully by the camera-eye narration that has emerged in twentieth-century narratives and restricts the narrative to including only such information as is also accessible to an external observer. From the point of view of literary history, moreover, it is highly significant that this narrative principle only becomes established when the realist programme is abandoned. The historical data thus provides further evidence that the function of figural narration in the realistic novel is not simply to guarantee objectivity. We must seek its definition elsewhere.

In order to discover what shape the alternative definition might take, it will be helpful to consider the revision of Stanzel's typology in Genette's *Figures III*[2]. Genette bases his criticism on a distinction which Stanzel failed to consider in his typology of authorial, figural, and first-person novels. The problem with Stanzel's classification is that it conflates two separate criteria: whether the narrator is part of the represented world or not, and the perspective of representation. For this reason, Genette convincingly points out that it is necessary to separate the question of who is seeing from that of who is speaking. From this distinction he derives the modified typology of focalization, which covers three possibilities: internal focalization, external focalization, and zero focalization. Genette defines these contrasting types by comparing the knowledge of the narrator with that of the participating characters in each case. I have attempted to show elsewhere that this definition is not perfect and that it is therefore questionable to define the different types on the basis of the criterion

[2] Genette (1972: 203–24).

which Genette uses[3]. The problem is that comparing the information known to narrator and characters does not, and indeed cannot, take into account the key requirement that underlies all the various techniques of perspective: focalized narration is always characterized by the linkage of narration to a process of perception. Where this is link is present, the narrator's information can—and this is the defining, fundamental feature of all focalization—be represented in a process of perception, and as a result the text acquires an additional structural level. To this extent, it is not enough simply to note and pass over the omissions that result from the narrator's voluntary decision not to follow up every theoretically possible lead. If we direct our attention at this peculiarity of narrative perspective, our interest shifts from the *bearer* of the point of view in question to the technique of the perspective itself. Understandably, Genette's typology is entirely concerned with question of the perceiving subject, for that is precisely the factor at which his distinguishing features, the essentially topographical relations 'internal' and 'external,' are directed. However, the difference between zero focalization and the various kinds of point of view would seem to be far more important. While Genette's classificatory model gives the impression that we are dealing with variants inside a single typology, the fact of the matter is that there is a clear distinction between zero focalization and the other kinds of focalization, and it is only when this boundary is crossed that the question of forming a point of view becomes significant for the narrative.

## 1.

The above state of affairs is not only theoretically possible; it becomes increasingly plausible when we examine the practical evidence of real narratives. The way that authors manipulate narrative technique confirms the idea that the presence of focalization, the narrative representation of information in a process of perception, is more important than the actual subject of such a perception. The technique of focalization is most closely associated with realistic narration, and it is typical of the latter that the subject of the various processes of perception can change with a considerable amount of freedom. One consequence of this is that it can at times be anything but certain *who* really has the role of the perceiving subject in a

3 Kablitz (1988: 237–55).

perspective. Let us consider the opening of Flaubert's *Education sentimentale* as a first example:

> Le 15 septembre 1840, vers six heures du matin, *la Ville-de-Montereau*, près de partir, fumait à gros tourbillons devant le quai Saint-Bernard.
> Des gens arrivaient hors d'haleine; des barriques, des câbles, des corbeilles de linge gênaient la circulation; les matelots ne répondaient à personne; on se heurtait; les colis montaient entre les deux tambours, et le tapage s'absorbait dans le bruissement de la vapeur, qui, s'échappant par des plaques de tôle, enveloppait tout d'une nuée blanchâtre, tandis que la cloche, à l'avant, tintait sans discontinuer.
> Enfin le navire partit; et les deux berges, peuplées de magasins, de chantiers et d'usines, filèrent comme deux larges rubans que l'on déroule.
> Un jeune homme de dix-huit ans, à longs cheveux et qui tenait un album sous son bras, restait auprès du gouvernail, immobile. A travers le brouillard, il contemplait des clochers, des édifices dont il ne savait pas les noms; puis il embrassa, dans un dernier coup d'œil, l'île Saint-Louis, la Cité, Notre-Dame; et bientôt, Paris disparaissant, il poussa un grand soupir[4].

It is immediately apparent that in this extract the narrator combines two perspectives which can only be clearly distinguished from one another at a single specific point: only in the final sentence of our quotation is explicit mention made of a perceiving subject to whom the perceptions described belong: "il contemplait." There can be no doubt, therefore, that here it is Frédéric Moreau, introduced to us as such in the subsequent paragraph, who is observing the world. There can be just as little doubt, however, that this traveller is himself being watched from outside in the preceding sentence, where he is described as "un jeune homme de dix-huit ans, à longs cheveux et qui tenait un album sous son bras." This assertion might lead us to believe that everything reported up to this point has been narrated from the point of view of an anonymous watcher or that the narrator is here informing us of his own observations. (We shall consider the two alternatives below.) In fact, however, neither possibility does full justice to the text, as is made most apparent by the sentence with which the third paragraph begins: "Enfin le navire partit." This comment, as the introductory adverb makes clear, expresses relief at the end of the initial chaos described before the departure of the ship; it clearly subjectivizes the view of events and in this respect anticipates the "jeune homme" who is introduced explicitly at the beginning of the next paragraph. This anticipatory function is supported not least by the fact that

[4] Flaubert (1951: II, 33).

from the beginning the young man is supplied with attributes which identify him as markedly sensitive and is, moreover, shown by the course of the narrative to set himself deliberately apart from the crowd that causes the opening disorder.

The confusion caused by the game of perspective in the opening of Flaubert's *Education sentimentale* increases if we take the continuation of the sentence in question into consideration. It lists a series of things that the traveller passes on the bank: warehouses, building yards, and factories. But the things mentioned here are clearly different from what Frédéric notices: the church steeples and buildings which he does not know and are slightly mysterious for him seem to attract his attention for this very reason. To this extent, the text contrasts two basic kinds of gaze: a "realistic" one, which perceives little that is welcoming, and a "romantic" one, which seeks out that which meets its expectations. Against this background, the question of who sees poses itself even more forcefully, yet at the same time seems impossible to answer—in terms of Genette's categories, it is impossible to distinguish between internal and external focalization with any real precision here. An anonymous watcher's observation of events slides in and out of the protagonist's perspective. Many observations can be linked to an unambiguous source, others to several possible sources. Yet, as we shall see in more detail below, it this very fuzziness that reveals a structural model whose mark is firmly imprinted on the realistic novel. At the beginning of the *Education sentimentale*, the behaviour of the hero, his view of the world around him, is not clearly set apart from the observations of an anonymous *on*. This represents a key feature of narrative perspective in the narrative world of the realistic novel: its world comes into being primarily through observation. Observation builds a structural model that is ultimately independent of any and all individual observers and bearers of perspective. In other words, observation has primacy over the individual observers, who represent different ways of filling in a universal observation structure which is, to a certain extent at least, preexistent.

This situation helps to shed light on the question raised above concerning the relationship between the narrator and an anonymous perceiving subject. The question is in fact meaningless in that it rests on the misleading assumption that there is a distinction between two different persons or instances—what really happens is that the narrator himself participates in the generic observation structure which antedates every individual process of perception. This does not, of course, prevent the

narrator from making his own particular viewpoint clear (ironically, for example), as indeed he does in the extract we have just examined—the romantic gaze of the "hero" is confronted with a realistic one, the contrast between them marks a difference in perspective, and to this extent the narrator becomes the opposite of Frédéric Moreau. Both perspectives, therefore, are unmistakably subjectivized. But this does not change the fact that we are concerned with two different accentuations of a single observation structure which exists prior to both perceptions. Even in this case, where the narrator adopts the point of view of a character, we are still concerned with the filling in of an observation structure which is always primary and to which even the narrator is subject.

This structure reveals another highly significant aspect of the difficulty we had in distinguishing the different perspectives in the opening of the *Education sentimentale*: the observing hero is always observed himself, and the narrated world cannot exist before it is formed by a sequence of such competing gazes. Thus, observation does not simply serve as a means of communicating the material to be narrated here, it does not function merely as a strategy for making the material plausible or as a procedure for ensuring it is represented objectively. Instead, observation is a force which structures the narrated world itself. Focalized narration, therefore, represents far more than just a technique—as a mode of representation, it is rooted in the conditions which constitute the represented world itself. Focalization is, as it were, the hinge that binds the represented world to its representation[5].

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[5] Superficially, this structural model could give the impression of confirming again the familiar assumption that text and world are identical, according to which the text constantly provides the specifications for the world and makes the entire world appear as a text. The only difference in the present case, if we choose to follow this interpretation, is that it is the narrative technique of focalization that implements the conversion of reality into signs. However, our analysis takes a different, in fact opposite, line. We have defined focalization as the representation of narrative information in a process of perception. In this case, therefore, an extralinguistic factor enters into an essentially hybrid connection with the linguistic structures themselves. The representational structure and the constituents of the represented world do not bind reality to the principles of textuality. That is to say, their task is not, as has become all too familiar, to describe and explain using a medium whose nature we must approach as treating reality as nothing but the product of its own representation. Instead, the representation of this reality is now derived from that reality's own constituents, for realistic narration, as we have seen, represents the immediate continuation of the observation that establishes the nar-

I shall now demonstrate this theory by examining the opening of another of Flaubert's novels, the beginning of *Madame Bovary*. Typologists find the beginning of this text somewhat disconcerting because it places a major obstacle in the way of the otherwise obvious and easily justifiable classification of this tale of adultery as a classic example of figural narration. The irritating problematic obstacle lies in the fact that the narrator draws attention to his own presence at the beginning. "Nous" is the first word of the novel, and the authorial presence which it implies is not eas-

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rated world in the first place. In abstract terms, this in itself is not enough to silence the argument that the represented world adapts itself to conform with the principles of its representation and thereby confirms again the fundamental and universal textuality of the world. From a historical standpoint, to be sure, one could object by pointing out that this structural model appears surprisingly late. But this can be countered by pointing out that a long time went by before narration became able to clarify its own fictionality and employ techniques which represent the world as a structure—and this is the important point—of represented reality. However, such a teleology of discourse that explains itself to itself seems unlikely given that narration had to open itself to decisive structural forces in order to integrate processes of perception. That is why, for example, the retrospective chronological arrangement of a narrative and the open-ended chronological orientation of observation are opposed to one another (see Kablitz [2002: 389–454] for more details).
However, even this can be understood as a concession required by the teleological explanation process, whereby, of course, we must treat the theoretical project of explanation as the most fundamental driving force behind narrative practice, as it inevitably is in any interpretation of a historical process as an act of deconstructing the truth of fiction. In systematic terms, therefore, it would seem hard not to agree with the argument that all representation has a self-referential factor by means of which alone its object is created. It is therefore necessary to consider the assumptions behind the postulate of such self-referentiality, for we cannot ignore the fact that the assertion of a fundamental autopoiesis in literature's linguistic representation of reality makes at least one insecure assumption: if it is a principle that all representation constitutes itself, there can be no possibility of comparing representation and what is represented with one another or even placing them in a relation to one another. The fragility of the postulate in question is revealed by precisely this consequence of suspending, by means of system-internal conclusiveness, the possibility of scrutiny.
Essentially, we are dealing with a consequence of the linguistic turn which underlies deconstructivist theory. It draws on the fact that we can access reality only by means of language, and it therefore ends up ignoring the fact that language itself is part of the same reality to which it represents an opposite. In contrast, a short demonstration will be provided at the end of this essay of how, in the case discussed here, a way of approaching the structure of representation can be derived from the object of representation.

ily reconcilable with the principle of internal focalization[6]. Granted, this "nous," and with it the presence of a homodiegetic narrator, vanishes from the narrated world silently and without trace not long after the novel begins. This, however, just makes the question of its function all the more pressing; it is, after all, hard to believe that an author of Flaubert's calibre could have introduced the "nous" into the text as an accidental oversight—least of all at the beginning, which is by its very nature one of the most obviously significant parts of any novel. To help clarify the situation, we must consider the famous opening lines of *Madame Bovary* in detail once again:

> Nous étions à l'étude, quand le Proviseur entra, suivi d'un *nouveau* habillé en bourgeois et d'un garçon de classe qui portait un grand pupitre. Ceux qui dormaient se réveillèrent, et chacun se leva comme surpris dans son travail.
> Le Proviseur nous fit signe de nous rasseoir; puis, se tournant vers le maître d'études: "Monsieur Roger, lui dit-il à demi-voix, voici un élève que je vous recommande, il entre en cinquième. Si son travail et sa conduite sont méritoires, il passera *dans les grands*, où l'appelle son âge."[7]

These lines are followed by a portrait, still described from the perspective of an *on*, which lists a merciless series of features which characterize the boy from the country who has come to the city as a clumsy and backward comical figure in the eyes of the other pupils[8]. Needless to say, the

[6] This analysis may require further explanation, for if we stick to Genette's categories in this case, we are dealing with internal focalization which belongs more specifically to a group of persons. Furthermore, this group is distinguished by the fact that it includes a homodiegetic narrator as one of its members. This makes all further internal focalizations problematic because they imply that a character presented in the represented world is able to see inside some, perhaps all, other characters without further ado. This, however, contradicts our idea of what is realistically possible. Figural narration is a variant of authorial narration, and thus the "nous" with which the novel *Madame Bovary* begins could plausibly be more than just a designation for a class group that critically considers the new arrival, Charles Bovary. Part of the pronoun, perhaps, contains the authorial gesture with which the sovereign subject of the narrative asserts itself. In this respect, "nous" can be seen as doubly encoded. On the one hand, it stands for those who, taken together, form the subject of perception; on the other hand, it can equally well be seen as standing for those who give voice to their observations with the authority that belongs to the narrator.

[7] Flaubert (1951: I, 293).

[8] Ibid.: "Resté dans l'angle, derrière la porte, si bien qu'on l'apercevait à peine, le *nouveau* était un gars de la campagne, d'une quinzaine d'années environ, et plus haut de taille qu'aucun de nous tous. Il avait les cheveux coupés droit sur le front, comme un

description is not particularly flattering to the new boy, Charles Bovary. It is widely known that such a catalogue of shortcomings is a typical feature of Flaubert's narratorial style. In this case, however, the familiar features are actually suggested by the opening lines that we have quoted; they are suggested, that is to say, before they are actually enumerated. For example, we should note the markedly different characteristics of the two characters who follow the headmaster. Each of them has a different eye-catching feature—that, clearly, is why it is mentioned—which is seen firmly from the perspective of the pupils. They know the headmaster well, so, after he is identified as such, they do not find it necessary to register any further details about him. The two characters behind him, however, are unknown and thus described on the basis of external appearances. The school servant is carrying a large desk, and the new boy, we read, is dressed "en bourgeois." His clothing stands out to the gaze as inappropriate and therefore attracts attention. Thus, that which the eye sees is mentioned, and this is so, significantly, where there is no possibility of a more broadly based identification[9].

The opening scene of *Madame Bovary* confronts us with a striking duality in the perspective of observation similar to that which we have observed in the beginning of the *Education sentimentale*. As we have just seen, the characters who unexpectedly enter the classroom are described from the standpoint of a small group denoted by the "nous" which opens the novel. In addition, however, this group is itself viewed from outside. The most important point to note here is that the distinction between the pupils who were diligently working and those who had fallen asleep is levelled: both rise as if surprised during their work. The sleepers, it would seem, are considerably talented actors. In this way, an incident that is in itself apparently insignificant, if not to say trivial, is transformed into a

chantre de village, l'air raisonnable et fort embarrassé. Quoiqu'il ne fût pas large des épaules, son habit-veste de drap vert à boutons noirs devait le gêner aux entournures et laissait voir, par la fente des parements, des poignets rouges habitués à être nus. Ses jambes, en bas bleus, sortaient d'un pantalon jaunâtre très tiré par les bretelles. Il était chaussé de souliers forts, mal cirés, garnis de clous".

[9] In addition, we should note here that the generally accepted characteristic of figural narration as the adoption of the dramatic mode of representation by the narrative (e.g. Stanzel's remark quoted in n. 1) is not quite correct. Figural narration is actually a highly subjective form of narration in so far as its operation depends on the exact information held by a specific observing character.

multifaceted study of character by the combination of narrative technique with the keen eye of a not entirely benevolent observer. The somewhat flowery language of the headmaster very probably has a significant part in creating this effect; his slightly pompous words, whose artificial ceremony contrasts somewhat with his use of the technical term "dans les grands," are the more interesting because they are spoken in a low voice. All in all, nobody comes away unscathed. Above all, however, we once again find ourselves dealing with reciprocal observation. On the one hand, the "nous"—the class group—is introduced as an observing subject; on the other hand, it is itself described from a certain distance. There can be no doubt that the narrator is responsible for this latter effect. The ambivalence of perspective shows that the narrator's viewpoint develops, as it were, from a preceding observation that belongs to a group of which he himself is a member. Thus, not only does the narrator own the observation; his perceptions spring from the corresponding behaviour of the community of which he too is a part.

The description of Charles Bovary's arrival soon gives way to the report of what has happened prior to this morning, the narrative of the hero's background and his life up to this point. The reader is informed of it from the customary perspective of a narrator who commands an unquestioned knowledge of all that he relates to us. To this extent, the issues raised by the personal pronoun "nous" could be considered forgotten, were it not for the fact that we have not seen the last of the word. It appears again when the circle opened by the novel's opening scene is closed as the report of the life of Emma's future husband reaches the point at which he enters his new school for the first time:

> Six mois se passèrent encore; et, l'année d'après [sc. sa première communion], Charles fut définitivement envoyé au collège de Rouen, où son père l'amena lui-même, vers la fin d'octobre, à l'époque de la foire Saint-Romain.
> Il serait maintenant impossible à aucun de nous de se rien rappeler de lui. C'était un garçon de tempérament modéré, qui jouait aux récréations, travaillait à l'étude, écoutant en classe, dormant bien au dortoir, mangeant bien au réfectoire[10].

This is the last occurrence in Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* of the "nous" which opens the novel; as a narratorial instance, furthermore, it here subsumes an entire community of narrators, *the former pupils*. Before we turn to a detailed consideration of the departure of the collective narrator

[10] Ibid.: 298.

and the various ways in which it can be read, we should note that the recurrence of “nous” also affects the report of the life of Charles Bovary that precedes it, for the report now appears to stem from the group that announces its presence with “nous” in the above quotation. The information provided in the narration of the report belongs, so to speak, to a collective memory, for what is said in it represents the class group’s shared knowledge about the new pupil with whom they find themselves confronted.

What are the implications of the departure of the “nous” from the narrative? We read that “il serait maintenant impossible à aucun de nous de se rien rappeler de lui.” But if that were really the case, there would be nothing more to be narrated about him. The poor memory of Charles’s fellow pupils is explained immediately by what follows, for the only notable aspect of his daily routine is its banality. He behaves just as people like him are meant to behave: he plays at playtime and works in class. But a narrator created by Flaubert could hardly offer us such a universally regular and thus infinitely monotonous routine and life without providing a vice, albeit a concealed one, to go with them. And the vice is indeed there, for Charles’s reserved temperament does not extend beyond the dining hall and dormitory where he demonstrates his healthy appetite and enjoys his restful sleep. Despite the modesty that prevails in the other aspects of his character, the development of his natural, indeed animal, urges has not suffered as a result, as is confirmed by his later liking for Emma. And yet, despite Charles’s generally bleak and ordinary existence which lacks any special or striking features to make it worth remembering, a considerable proportion of a somewhat lengthy novel is devoted to telling the reader about him. All this demonstrates that the text espouses the principles of its well-known theoretical programme right from the start. Flaubert’s novel deliberately tells of the unspectacular because there is nothing of importance to be narrated in this world. This axiom of Flaubert’s narrative style now joins the other properties for which the community instantiated by “nous,” the first word of the novel, is responsible. But why does the narrator of *Madame Bovary* develop the novel’s plot out of an experience shared with others? Why is the beginning characterized by the perspective of an entire group instead of the perspective of the individual and perhaps therefore automatically privileged narrator?

To help answer this question, I should like to introduce an additional angle from which to approach the problem: the reflections on literary theory which are also contained in the opening of *Madame Bovary*. An obvi-

ous parallel can be identified between the position of the class group and that of the reader, or rather readers, who are just beginning to read the novel. The awkward Charles Bovary appears before the somewhat unrefined class of pupils just as unexpectedly as he does before the readers. In both cases, he is the new boy who suddenly comes into view without warning. Not only does the beginning of the novel mark an important turning point in Charles's own life; he himself attracts the curious gaze of his fellow pupils and the readers of the novel. Both groups cast a somewhat critical eye on the new boy. Two groups of people, two collective perspectives, gather around the narrator, and both are arrayed in parallel to one another. The narrator coincides with the "nous" of the class group, and this group encounters a new boy just as unexpectedly as the readers do. In this respect, the opening scene of *Madame Bovary* is a *mise en abyme* of the beginning of the novel itself.

In itself, this kind of proximity to the reader is not unusual in the beginning of a realistic novel. The technical rhetorical repertoire of the genre's topical opening includes a narrator who follows an unknown character as if he has encountered the character by chance and does not know the character's identity; only by observing him gradually does he discover more about who he is and develop an interest in what happens to him[11]. Such a construction also involves the perspective of a reader. To a certain extent, in fact, it adopts a reader's point of view. What is different about *Madame Bovary*, however, is that it intensifies the poetics of the novel's opening by making the unfortunate Charles immediately appear as a sceptically received new boy in the eyes of a small group. What, then, is the effect of attributing the perspective to the "nous" of a community? If Flaubert so markedly allows the perspective of the narrator to coincide with the perspective of a small social group at the beginning of *Madame Bovary*, and if the group's perspective itself merges with that of a larger group, the readers, he is thereby demonstrating a key requirement of focalized narration in the realistic novel. His technique provides further confirmation that focalized narration, the linking of narration and perception, represents a structural prerequisite of realistic narration. For this reason, Flaubert has the narrator's perspective of observation emerge from the observation of a "nous," and this personal pronoun simultaneously means an *on* which the community of readers then joins. If this theoretical

[11] Cf. in more detail below.

device simultaneously confronts the class group and the readers with the new boy, Charles Bovary, and places them in parallel to one another, their resultant juxtaposition conceals the fact that the figures denoted by "nous" are as unfamiliar to the reader as the boy called Charles who enters the classroom. However, this same unity created by the shared observation of the new arrival makes us forget the differences between the two groups and unites them by means of a common interest. To this extent, the *on* among which the narrator initially includes himself marks the observation structure that is the most essential element of the formation of the world of the realistic novel. Narration of this kind, therefore, corresponds to a social model in which the social group is essentially conceived of as a society of observers. The narrator's behaviour inside this society is not fundamentally different from that of any other member, even if, at least initially, he is rather more skilful than them[12]. The beginning of Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* flattens the levels of narrator, class group, and readers, and is, so to speak, a paradigmatic illustration of the parallel status of their different perspectives.

## 2.

Although there are good reasons for treating Flaubert's novels as classic examples of what modern critics refer to as figural narration, this does not mean that Flaubert himself invented the technique. Before him, Stendhal employed similar methods with considerable success, as Georges Blin first showed in his definitive study, which despite its age is no less important today than when it first appeared[13]. In Stendhal too, moreover, the technique of focalized narration develops out of an observation structure which antedates the perspectives of the individual characters. Let us consider the beginning of Stendhal's *Le Rouge et le Noir* as a specific example. The social context in which events at the beginning of the novel take place is provided by the town of Verrières and, as the opening shows, comes into being through the observations of a new arrival, a traveller who is also a representative of the reader. He is, so to speak, an Everyman

[12] This qualification is necessary because of a development in Flaubert's œuvre which is manifested in the revision undergone by his poetics in his later work, the *Trois contes*. Cf. also Kablitz (2002).

[13] Blin (1954).

figure whose role could quite easily be adopted by any reader. It is highly revealing to examine how the gaze of the traveller who assesses the society at the beginning of the novel develops out of a completely different perspective:

> La petite ville de Verrières peut passer pour l'une des plus jolies de la Franche-Comté. Ses maisons blanches avec leur toits pointus de tuiles rouges s'étendent sur la pente d'une colline, dont les touffes de vigoureux châtaigniers marquent les moindres sinuosités. Le Doubs coule à quelques centaines de pieds au-dessous de ses fortifications, bâties jadis par les Espagnols, et maintenant ruinées[14].

The scene described with these words at the beginning of Stendhal's *Le Rouge et le Noir* is obviously bound to the gaze of a watcher, even if the result of the latter's perception is summarized and anticipated in advance by the very first sentence. With undisguised pleasure, the watcher's eye passes lovingly over the landscape which combines nature and civilization in a harmonious synthesis. The product of the survey is a pleasing tableau which produces nothing but contentment in the watcher and most likely has the same effect on the reader, whose impression we shall describe simply as one of uninterested contentment. A veritable idyll is presented to us here; in certain ways, it is more reminiscent of the classical *locus amoenus* than the typical view of a romantic landscape. Even the traces of time that can be seen in the ruined castle fit in perfectly with the picturesque impression. The beginning of the novel is thus based on aesthesis in two senses: it is defined by visual perception and also stimulates contentment. The gaze is, so to speak, saturated with the enjoyment produced by watching. Aesthesis and aesthetics are placed side by side. Linguistically speaking, we are dealing with a description, and it is this discourse type, essentially based on spatial structures, that represents the proper linguistic equivalent of a process of perception. If we now turn our attention to classical rhetoric, we find that description and beauty do indeed belong together. It is well known that they are connected in ekphrasis. In this respect, the opening lines of *Le Rouge et le Noir* are located firmly in the domain of a poetics of ekphrasis where perception finds its fulfilment in uninterested contentment. But this beginning is simultaneously an end, for it really just serves to contrast with what follows:

[14] Stendhal (1952: 219).

> A peine entre-t-on dans la ville que l'on est étourdi par le fracas d'une machine bruyante et terrible en apparence. Vingt marteaux pesants, et retombant avec un bruit qui fait trembler le pavé, sont élevés par une roue que l'eau du torrent fait mouvoir. Chacun de ces marteaux fabrique, chaque jour, je ne sais combien de milliers de clous. Ce sont de jeunes filles fraîches et jolies qui présentent aux coups de ces marteaux énormes les petits morceaux de fer qui sont rapidement transformés en clous. Ce travail, si rude en apparence, est un de ceux qui étonnent le plus le voyageur qui pénètre pour la première fois dans les montagnes qui séparent la France de l'Helvétie. Si, en entrant à Verrières, le voyageur demande à qui appartient cette belle fabrique de clous qui assourdit les gens qui montent la grande rue, on lui répond avec un accent traînard: *Eh! Elle est à M. le maire*[15].

The first difference to note between the beginning of the first chapter of Stendhal's novel and this third section is the contrast between distance and proximity. The initial uninterested contentment is based on a distance and detachment that, as we now see, produces what is basically a deceptive illusion: when the idyll is seen in closer proximity, it is shattered with brutal force. This is expressed first by a change in the medium of perception: the pleasing visual perceptions that form an ideal aesthetics of the *imitation de la belle nature* are replaced by an acoustic impression, the deafening noise of machines. This change in the sensory organ is linked to a change in the nature of what is perceived, which shifts from being static to dynamic. The tableau is internally stable and disconnected from the passage of time, which it translates into the picturesque form of the ruins. This idyllic tableau, however, is now replaced by bustling activity that destroys all traces of peace and beauty alike. Even the pretty young girls who change pieces of iron into nails by holding them to be hit by the powerful hammers are enveloped by the grim surroundings that pervade this environment. They almost seem to have been abandoned helplessly to the mercy of the monstrous machines that control what happens; in this context, the fact that, to make matters worse, they are nonetheless attractive to look at is more a mockery than anything else. The qualities of the narrator's gaze change in tandem with the change in the objects about which he tells us. In the opening idyll, we meet him as an appreciative watcher, but now he becomes an observer. He is no longer satisfied with visual and aural impact, with aesthetic impressions in the literal sense of the word. When the aesthetic impression collapses after being exposed as an illusion created by distance, there is no place left for uninterested con-

[15] Ibid.: 219f.

tentment. Instead, the observer shows himself to be considerably interested—the sounds of the bustling factory stimulate curiosity about who owns it, and the narrator consequently makes enquiries to satisfy that curiosity. The production facility makes the narrator ask who owns it. With that, the newly curious, constantly observing narrator is drawn into the web of profit and property that marks every aspect of society in the town of Verrières[16]. The dissolution of the initial unity of aesthesis and aesthetics converts the gaze of the watcher into the searching gaze of an observer, a gaze that wants to get to the bottom of things.

One consequence of this is that the traveller arriving in Verrières does not confine himself to specific details but directs his attention at the wider situation of the social order that governs the community. This is why the context of the subsequent representations changes so conspicuously as the town begins to present itself to the new arrival. Scarcely has he received an answer to his question about the owner of the factory, when the latter appears in person to present himself to the critical gaze of the unknown observer:

> Pour peu que le voyageur s'arrête quelques instants dans cette grande rue de Verrières, qui va en montant depuis la rive du Doubs jusque vers le sommet de la colline, il y a cent à parier contre un qu'il verra paraître un grand'homme à l'air affairé et important:
> A son aspect tous les chapeaux se lèvent rapidement. Ses cheveux son grison-nants, et il est vêtu de gris. Il est chevalier de plusieurs ordres, il a un grand front, un nez aquilin, et au total sa figure ne manque pas d'une certaine régularité : on trouve même, au premier aspect, qu'elle réunit à la dignité du maire de village cette sorte d'agrément qui peut encore se rencontrer avec quarante-huit ou cinquante ans. Mais bientôt le voyageur parisien est choqué d'un certain air de contentement de soi et de suffisance mêlé à je ne sais quoi de borné et de peu inventif. On sent enfin que le talent de cet homme-là se borne à se faire payer exactement ce qu'on lui doit, et à payer lui-même le plus tard possible quand il doit.
> Tel est le maire de Verrières[17].

The traveller sees the mayor under conditions to which an observer unfamiliar with the facts would be subject; that is why he does not realize whom he is facing straight away. Only when everyone raises their hats on seeing the man who appears to command respect is the traveller able to

[16] Shortly afterwards, in the second chapter, we read: 'Voilà le grand mot qui décide de tout à Verrieres: "RAPPORTER DU REVENU. A lui seul il représente la pensée habituelle de plus des trois quarts des habitants"' (ibid.: 224).

[17] Ibid.: 220.

assess his position properly. In a sense, then, the traveller is presented with the social order of Verrières without having asked to be shown it. Not only does his curious gaze examine the town in order to uncover the rules which govern it; the community itself wants the external observer to see clearly inside it. Verrières is positively designed to be observed. The organization of the society and the gaze which seeks to ascertain the rules behind it are geared towards one another. Just as the idyll seemed designed to make the watcher content, so now he encounters a society whose rules are calculated to reveal themselves to his gaze. However, the watcher must be a perceptive one, an observer, if he is to get to the bottom of things. He must not simply be content with external appearances. In this sense, it is striking that the portrait of the mayor repeats the change which we observed previously at the beginning of the novel when aesthetic contentment turns into critical interest and illusion into truthful insight.

We are all familiar with how the typical portrait takes shape as the gaze follows a specific path. Typically, the description of a person begins with a feature of the head and describes the person's appearance by moving from above to below. It is clear, however, that the portrait of the mayor of Verrières does not follow this pattern. Instead, the traveller's gaze concentrates on a sequence of features arranged according to a different scheme. First, we have features of colour, whereby similarities between colours govern the path of the gaze. The mayor's grey hair followed by his grey clothing are the first things to be seen. The portrait continues with the remark that "il est chevalier de plusieurs ordres." This initially seems to depart from what can be perceived and to draw instead on knowledge that can only be attained by other means. In fact, however, this information can still be derived from the traveller's observations: several decorations are evidently attached to the clothing on which he has just commented. This observation is not itself thematized; instead, the significance of the decorations finds immediate linguistic expression. This is a further indication of where the observer's interests lie. Once again, we see that he does not operate in terms of external appearances; instead, he aims to identify the underlying social order, to uncover the significance behind what is immediately obvious[18]. This desire to move beyond all that

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[18] Personal characteristics very similar to those displayed here by the anonymous observer are later to be found in the perspective of the characters. Take, for example, Ju-

is superficial returns to prominence straight away. The first impression made by the mayor's face, itself characterized by just two conspicuous details, a wide forehead and an aquiline nose, is an aesthetic one: "une certaine régularité." The attractive proportions of his face seem to correlate ideally with the rank of his office: "Elle réunit à la dignité du maire de village cette sorte d'agrément qui peut encore se rencontrer avec quarante-huit ou cinquante ans." Yet this pleasing impression is immediately revealed to be a deception, just as the town of Verrières, so pretty when seen from the outside, quickly loses all its charm when experienced from the inside. The mayor's self-satisfied features, which betray a certain lack of intelligence, point to a key feature of the his character: his business skills, which do not seem particularly appropriate for someone holding his office.

As a result, the portrait of M. de Rênal acquires a circular structure. The very first impression of his character is based on an "air affairé et important." This observation does at first seem appropriate, given the reverence with which the people behave toward their mayor. In the end, however, the portrait exposes the earlier judgement as mistaken by replacing the impression of importance with the conviction that the man is actually materialistic and interested in nothing more than financial gain. This shows that observation is a means of clarification which is continually on guard against self-deception. The corruption of the mayor's official role by a businessman's private interests stands out as the epitome of the social order of this town, which would appear to be totally infested with greed for property and profit. As a result of the combination of public and private affairs, the traditional portrait becomes a study of society. This change presupposes an observer who is constantly in search of hidden regularities. That is why the beginning of Stendhal's novel *Le Rouge et le Noir* pairs a structurally curious observer with a community that seems

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lien Sorel's first meeting with Mathilde de la Môle at the evening meal: "Julien entendit la marquise qui disait un mot sévère, en élevant un peu la voix. Presque en même temps il aperçut une jeune personne, extrêmement blonde et fort bien faite, qui vint s'asseoir vis-à-vis de lui. Elle ne luit plut point; cependant, en la regardant attentivement il pensa qu'il n'avait jamais vu des yeux aussi beaux; mais ils annonçaient une grande froideur d'âme. Par la suite, Julien trouva qu'ils avaient l'expression de l'ennui qui examine, mais qui se souvient de l'obligation d'être imposant" (ibid.: 450). Significantly, this portrait too develops into an assertion of mutual observation; there is, after all, an express reference to the "ennui qui examine."

devoted to being observed and practically offers itself to the gaze of the visitor. His gaze is no longer the same gaze that beheld the beautiful landscape. No longer satisfied with uninterested contentment, it has become distinctly more interested and turned from aesthetic watching to observation.

The principle of universal observation continues to define the world of the novel, as is thematized in the first chapter, where the past life of M. de Rênal is described. The mayor has a simply insatiable desire for property[19], and this compels him to extend the site of his house by acquir-

[19] The desire for property in Verrières is also evident from a peculiar interest in the construction of walls: "En Franche-Comté, plus on bâtit de murs, plus on hérisse sa propriété de pierres rangées les unes au-dessus des autres, plus on acquiert de droits aux respects de ses voisins" (ibid.: 221).
This emphasis on property serves the purpose of increasing social prestige. In this respect, property too is exposed to the observation of others (rather than being, as we might expect, concealed so as not to arouse displeasure or attract undue attention). It is not without importance for the construction of the story that the existence of walls has a key place in its opening. Because personal prestige is closely connected to the existence of walls, it fortuitously so happens that mayor de Rênal finds the opportunity to erect fine supporting-walls for the public thoroughfare: "Heureusement pour la réputation de M. de Rênal comme administrateur, un im-mense *mur de soutènement* était nécessaire à la promenade publique qui longe la colline à une centaine pieds au-dessus du cours du Doubs" (ibid.: 222).
The wall provides the location for events which are in many ways the starting point for the subsequent development of the plot: to their parents' horror, the mayor's young sons clamber about carelessly on the parapet. This leads to the plan of hiring a tutor to keep an eye on them, which results in Julien Sorel the younger entering the de Rênal household, thus setting in motion the process which gives rise to the all-too-familiar events which involve the mayor's wife and have unpleasant consequences for his marriage.
Thus, the very walls that were meant to raise his reputation to new heights actually have the opposite effect and make his prestige among his fellow citizens decline considerably, as would be practically inevitable for any cheated husband in his position. At its root, the situation represents a complex game involving the relationship between the categories of "nature" and "culture." The erection of walls documents the subjection of nature to human control and prompts the immature children to turn to the walls to satisfy their natural need for activity and movement. The project of taming the children's nature brings the future lover of Mme de Rênal into the household, and because of his presence a natural need, to which Stendhal gives a particular cultural slant, demolishes the conventions of the society in which the characters find themselves.

ing a plot of land that belongs to Sorel the elder, father of the protagonist Julien Sorel. The old farmer and sawmill owner recognizes M. de Rênal's evident interest in purchasing the land and is therefore able to force the price upwards by a considerable amount. Not only is the mayor prepared to divert the stream that drives Sorel's sawmill[20], he also offers to com-

The novel *Le Rouge et le Noir* therefore thematizes the ephemeral nature of all attempts to bring nature under cultural control and the fragility of the social order which is, for this very reason, upheld by constant mutual observation.

20 "Malgré sa fierté, M. le maire a dû faire bien des démarches auprès du vieux Sorel, paysan dur et entêté; il a dû lui compter de beaux louis d'or pour obtenir qu'il transportât son usine ailleurs. Quant au ruisseau *public* qui faisait aller la scie, M. de Rênal, au moyen du crédit dont il jouit à Paris, a obtenu qu'il fût détourné. Cette grâce lui vint après les élections de 182*" (ibid.: 221).
We hear of the stream beforehand at the beginning of the chapter, where it drives the deafening machines. In this way, it forms a link between nature and civilization (or culture) which initially seems to be a continuation of the connection between them which we first encounter in the aesthetic harmony of the traveller's view of Verrières. Directly after the description of the landscape, we read: "Verrières est abritée du côté nord par une haute montagne, c'est une des branches du Jura. Les cimes brisées du Verra se couvrent de neige dès les premiers froids d'octobre. Un torrent qui se précipite de la montagne traverse Verrières avant de se jeter dans le Doubs, et donne le mouvement à un grand nombre de scies à bois, c'est une industrie fort simple et qui procure un certain bien-être à la majeure partie des habitants plus paysans que bourgeois" (ibid.: 219).
Just as nature and culture form a harmonious whole, so they seem to be combined with economic benefits for the inhabitants of the town in the Jura region. However, in the coming events, as we have seen, it transpires that the economic exploitation of nature represents the destruction of the idyll. It is only logical, therefore, that the dissolution of the aesthetic illusion by man's manipulation of nature is followed by destructive interference with nature when the stream is diverted for the purpose of adding to property and profit. Nature is manipulated in a double sense, for the inhabitants of Verrières take control of it in two ways: by altering it and by acquiring property. The gaze that changes from that of an aesthetic watcher to that of an interested observer thus corresponds to the subjugation of nature by culture. (This shows that the relationship between nature and culture is thematized right from the opening lines of the novel; it continues to be a key topic throughout the text. Cf. n. 18.)
The description of Sorel the elder's diplomatic manipulation of the mayor is also a typical demonstration of Stendhal's narrative style, which can be characterized as creating the richest possible network of connections and associations. The information about Sorel's clever coup not only develops into a character study of the proud mayor who allows himself to be humiliated by a stubborn farmer simply because of his desire for property; it also leads to the political activity that reaches as far as Paris in order for the stream to be diverted. Even the circumstances that favour M. de Rênal's cause

pensate him with the not insignificant sum of six thousand francs and a considerably larger piece of land which is actually far more suited to the needs of Sorel's business[21]. Significantly, we are not simply presented with a report of these occurrences:

> Il est vrai que cet arrangement a été critiqué par les vraies bonnes têtes de l'endroit. Une fois, c'était un jour de dimanche, il y a quatre ans de cela, M. de Rênal, revenant de l'église en costume de maire, vit de loin le vieux Sorel, entouré de ses trois fils, sourire en le regardant. Ce sourire a porté un jour fatal dans l'âme de M. le maire, il pense depuis lors qu'il eût pu obtenir l'échange à meilleur marché[22].

Although only the mayor and Sorel the elder are directly affected by the agreement between them, the entire population of the town shares in it. Moreover, this abstract information provided by the narrator is not the only thing with which we are presented. It merges into the scene described here, which again shows a structure of mutual observation. Not only is the mayor subjected to constant observation by the inhabitants of Verrières in everything he does; he himself watches the citizens of his town just as carefully. To this extent, he becomes dependent on them in a way that contrasts strikingly with the authority to which his mayoral office entitles him. (It can thus hardly be mere chance that M. de Rênal is wearing the mayor's uniform in this scene.) The key manifestation of society in this community, then, is mutual observation; and this principle is the correlate of a narrative technique which employs focalization in order to produce an observation structure equivalent to that which is an inherent part of the represented world. It is this state of affairs that produces figural

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when it is most important are bound to fundamentally contingent circumstances: only the outcome of certain elections, which the narrator refuses to date precisely, establishes the climate that is favourable for him.
In addition, such a rich set of connections and associations is a marker of universal contingency, a sign which stands over the events depicted here and at every other point in Stendhal's novel. Such an order, or better disorder, in the narrated world makes plausible the foundation of structural observation that here, as everywhere, characterizes the realistic novel.)

[21] Ibid.: 221: "Il a donné à Sorel quatre arpents pour un, à cinq cents pas plus bas sur les bord du Doubs. Et, quoique cette position fût beaucoup plus avantageuse pour son commerce de planches de sapin, le père Sorel, comme on l'appelle depuis qu'il est riche, a eu le secret d'obtenir de l'impatience et de la *manie de propriétaire*, qui animaient son voisin, une somme de 6 000 francs."

[22] Ibid.: 221f.

narration, which is, after all, the fusion of the narratorial instance with the behaviour of a character[23].

## 3.

Balzac is not often seen as an exponent of figural narration in the tradition of the nineteenth-century French novel; instead, he has conventionally been treated as the ultimate authorial narrator, the unchallenged master of the world of his novels. These features of his writing meant that Balzac was the *bête noir* of the *nouveau roman* enthusiasts, who castigated him for being the opposite of the modernity that they saw represented by Flaubert. This evaluation of his narrative technique, although not always accompanied by such an outspoken value judgement, has never been adequately revised to reflect the fact that certain phenomena which do not ac-

[23] By characterizing focalization with the words "fusion of the narratorial instance with the behaviour of a character," we may seem to be contradicting, or at least ignoring, Genette's differentiation between the questions of who sees and who speaks with which he attacked Stanzel's typology of narrative situations. If so, we are not the first to do so. For example, Leibfried defines the figural narrative situation as follows: "The real author makes an acting character narrate in the third person" Leibfried (1970: 239; original version German). Sensible as the distinction which Genette proposes may be, it can nonetheless be profitable to investigate possible situations in which it may not actually apply. If we consider Leibfried's definition in more detail, it turns out to define what we commonly call free indirect discourse. This figure of narrative speech shares with focalization the fact that it involves a hybrid representation. While free indirect discourse hybridizes two discourses, focalization combines the narrator's speech with the non-linguistic behaviour of a represented character. As we have seen, in some ways the logic of observation runs against the grain of the logic of narration. Stanzel was basically aware of this when he misleadingly described the figural novel as "narratorless": "The figural novel is thus a narratorless novel in the sense that nowhere is the reader able to identify the personal traits of a narrator; thus, the reader does not have the impression that narration is actually taking place. The figural novel shows, portrays, represents" Stanzel (1964: 40; original version German). For Stanzel, "narratorlessness" arises from the absence of the individuality of a narratorial instance. The final sentence of our quotation from his discussion is enough to suggest that focalization implies a *structural* difference from narration itself; significantly, this difference rests on the contrast between perception and narration. While Genette's questions are directed at the *subjects* of perception and speech, which should indeed be kept distinct from one another, all focalizations nonetheless contain a *structural* hybrid between narration and a process of perception. In *this* respect, therefore, the two levels are considerably less clearly separated than Genette's two questions would have us believe.

tually support it have been observed in Balzac's narratives. Drawing on an observation by Michel Raimond, Genette has pointed out that on several occasions Balzac employs a "code" which features in the beginning of many nineteenth-century novels and is characterized by a narrator who moves through the narrated world like a stranger and whose gradual observations slowly reveal the identity of the participating characters[24]. Raimond's most substantial demonstration of this narrative schema is based on the *roman d'intrigue ou d'aventure* of Walter Scott, Jules Verne, and Alexandre Dumas. He explains that all these texts contain a *mystère* from which everything else develops. However, by insightfully pointing out that such forms of narration are also found at the beginning of the *roman sérieux* of the period, Genette casts doubt on the interpretation established by Raimond. But what other function could such an opening have in the texts concerned? There are clearly certain parallels to be observed between the situation of the reader and the situation of a narrator who acts in such a way that he behaves just like a reader who directly encounters people he does not know[25]. In my view, however, this explanation is not entirely adequate. To find a more satisfying answer, let us consider the beginning of Balzac's novel *La Cousine Bette* as an example. It is a paradigmatic illustration of the typical novel opening that we have just described.

> Vers le milieu du mois de juillet de l'années 1838, une de ces voitures nouvellement mises en circulation sur les places de Paris et nommées des *milords*, cheminait, rue de l'Université, portant un gros homme de taille moyenne, en uniforme de capitaine de la garde nationale.
>
> Dans le nombre de ces Parisiens accusés d'être si spirituels, il s'en trouve qui se croient infiniment mieux en uniforme que dans leurs habits ordinaires, et qui supposent chez les femmes des goûts assez dépravés pour imaginer qu'elles seront favorablement impressionnées à l'aspect d'un bonnet à poil et par le harnais militaire.
>
> La physionomie de ce capitaine appartenant à la deuxième légion respirait un contentement de lui-même qui faisait resplendir son teint rougeaud et sa figure passablement joufflue. A cette auréole que la richesse acquise dans le commerce met au front des boutiquiers retirés, on devinait l'un des élus de Paris, au moins ancien adjoint de son arrondissement. Aussi, croyez que le ruban de la Légion d'honneur ne manquait pas sur la poitrine, crânement bombée à la prussienne. Campé fièrement dans le coin du milord, cet homme décoré laissait errer son regard sur les passants qui souvent, à Paris, recueillent ainsi d'agréables sourires adressés à des beaux yeux absents.

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[24] See Genette (1972: 207f.).

[25] I have outlined this argument in Kablitz (1988).

> Le milord arrêta dans la partie de la rue comprise entre la rue Belle-Chasse et la rue de Bourgogne, à la porte d'une grande maison nouvellement bâtie sur une portion de la cour d'un vieil hôtel à jardin. On avait respecté l'hôtel qui demeurait dans sa forme primitive au fond de la cour diminuée de moitié.
> A la manière seulement dont le capitaine accepta les services du cocher pour descendre du milord, on eût reconnu le quinquagénaire. Il y a des gestes dont la franche lourdeur a toute l'indiscrétion d'un acte de naissance. Le capitaine remit son gant jaune à sa main droite, et, sans rien demander au concierge, se dirigea vers le perron du rez-de-chaussée de l'hôtel d'un air qui disait: "Elle est à moi!" Les portiers de Paris ont le coup d'œil savant, ils n'arrêtent point les gens décorés, vêtus de bleu, à démarche pesante; enfin ils connaissent les riches[26].

Here, the narrator introduces himself as someone who has access to what has appropriately been referred to as "systematic knowledge." He knows information that is, at least initially, available to everyone. He begins with the most general of all details by specifying the date and location before immediately reporting on the distinctive feature that caught his attention in the first place: a recently introduced carriage is going past. The structure of a perception is thus reproduced with considerable accuracy here: the interest in the character subsequently described develops from the sight of the carriage which caught the eye because of its modernity. The detailed description of the character, with its references to his figure and uniform, is closely based on the visual mode of perception. Gradually, more and more features of the captain of the national guard are revealed. Only later, however, does the reader discover that his name is Crevel—he must wait until the first time that the name is mentioned in the represented scene.

The various pieces of information which gradually complete the picture of the man whom we encounter are not only provided by observations drawn from the immediate context of the situation described. In order to acquire the information he relates to us, the narrator also makes use of knowledge that has been acquired earlier. Significantly, it is clear that he attaches considerable importance to avoiding suggesting that these prerequisites for the proper identification of Captain Crevel are his unique privilege alone. Instead, he wants to demonstrate that they are accessible to everyone ("on devinait l'un des élus de Paris," "on eût reconnu le quinquagénaire"). In this particular case, it may seem tenuous to credit everyone with the narrator's strikingly successful ability to identify the

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[26] Balzac (1977: 55f.).

more detailed circumstances of Captain Crevel's life. It is clear, however, that the narrator's objective, despite his indisputable individual perceptiveness, is to present his knowledge as a generally accessible one. It is therefore not difficult to identify the source of his skills. The narrator presents himself as a highly attentive observer who not only follows the behaviour of his fellow humans with great precision but also, so to speak, examines the nature of what he sees under a magnifying glass. The narrator is a skilled observer, and for this reason he can draw on a rich store of experience without laying claim to a special privilege in the process. He is really just making use of something that everyone can make use of.

In this respect, the closing lines of our quotation from the beginning of *La Cousine Bette* are of particular importance. There is a change in the nature of the perceptiveness which so far would have allowed anyone to discover just as much information about Crevel's character as the narrator does. The perceptiveness shifts to a figure inside the narrated world, the porter of the building that the captain enters. The porter does not attempt to challenge the captain's self-confident demeanour and determination to gain access to the building without hindrance, for "les portiers de Paris ont le coup d'œil savant, ils n'arrêtent point les gens décorés, vêtus de bleu, à démarche pesante; enfin ils connaissent les riches." There is clearly no application of perspective in the sense of focalization here, but the narrator's commentary still depends on the careful gaze of the porter, whose behaviour is no different in this respect from that of the narrator up to this point. Despite the different modes of narration, both the narrator's observation of Captain Crevel, implemented as external focalization, and the porter's evaluation of Crevel's character, as reported by the narrator, involve one and the same behaviour. The reader, moreover, learns about the unfamiliar, impetuous man from the attentiveness of porter and narrator in equal measure. In this way, the behaviour of narrator and the behaviour of character are directly related to one another. Not only is the reader's desire for information met; the standpoint which the narrator adopts in order to provide the information corresponds to the standpoint which the characters adopt toward each another inside the narrated world. For this reason, we cannot accept the earlier analysis of narrative structure in the opening of *La Cousine Bette*, which is based simply on parallels with the reader, who, as a new arrival in the world of the novel, necessarily adopts the viewpoint of the uninformed. The fact of the matter is that there are other narrative methods, much more readily available in the tradition of the novel, which could be drawn on to fill in gaps in the

knowledge of uninformed readers. By ignoring them and adopting instead the role that we have described here, the narrator from the very beginning employs the universal observation structure that encompasses narrator, reader, and characters alike in the realistic novel in general and is also one of the essential components of *La Cousine Bette* in particular.

This convergence of the narrator's observations with the gaze of the characters in the represented world is perhaps nowhere so clearly illustrated as at the beginning of Balzac's *Splendeurs et misères des courtisanes*, where the gaze becomes a key part of events. The section of the text concerned represents a *mise en abyme*, so to speak, of the realist theory of perception:

> En 1824, au dernier bal de l'Opéra, plusieurs masques furent frappés de la beauté d'un jeune homme qui se promenait dans les corridors et dans le foyer, avec l'allure des gens en quête d'une femme retenue au logis par des circonstances imprévues. Le secret de cette démarche, tour à tour indolente et pressée, n'est connue que des vieilles femmes et de quelques flâneurs émérités[27].

Even these few lines are enough to anticipate what the narrator will soon assert about the opera ball as a whole: it is really only pleasurable for those who are able to read it properly. The very first sentence of the novel makes clear that this is not just its charm but its very *raison d'être*, for, considered in detail, this first sentence holds a certain disappointment in store for the reader. By opening with the year, the location, and the occasion, it makes us expect something special, perhaps even an event. But fulfilling the expectation that something unusual will happen is precisely not what is performed by the continuation of the opening sentence. In fact, one could say that it ignores the expectation as if it had never been created and supplies in its place something that at first sight does not seem to be particularly special at all. In this respect, the beginning is very similar to the opening of Flaubert's *Education sentimentale*.

The beginning of Balzac's *Splendeurs et misères des courtisanes* describes the impression which a couple of masks gain of a passing young man. This does not appear to be anything more than a triviality. Even though the man is of some importance for the future course of events, he is not the object of attention as such; it is rather the case that he only enters the scene of things—steps onstage, as we might say in the context of

[27] Balzac (1977: 429f.).

the opera ball—as he is reflected in the mirror of others' observation of him.

Bearing the above points in mind, it is anything but coincidental that the person who is observed is seen by masks. Themselves concealed from the gaze of others, the masks have no existence without their gaze; they are nothing but observers. The opposition between visibility and concealment which is introduced by the mask immediately becomes functional in the text. The curiosity in the gaze of the masks is aroused by the handsomeness of the passing man, and so we find another instance of a visually striking feature setting everything in motion. Attention is soon diverted away from this impression to something else, the question of what might be meant by the way in which the man is walking. It is clear that the analysis of the young man's behaviour is performed with great proficiency, for not only are the observers hidden behind their masks able to tell from the way he moves that he has arranged a date; they can also tell from the way he walks that unfortunate circumstances have held up his partner for the evening. In the process, the narrator deals very carefully with the question of who has access to this considerable insight. Only a few, we read, are capable of such intelligence: old women and experienced flâneurs. There is thus every reason to believe that such people are behind the masks, even if this is not stated explicitly. Here we can seen a difference from the opening of *La Cousine Bette*, where the perceptiveness of the narrator's statements is derived from a knowledge that is basically accessible to anyone. In the case of the knowledge shown in the *Splendeurs et misères des courtisanes*, too, importance appears to be attached to portraying it not to as a privilege of the narrator but as derived from an experience which can also be counted on in those characters inside the situation described who, importantly, are skilful and experienced observers. But the narrator's perspective also merges with the perspective of the characters inside the fictional world. Both participate in the observation structure which not only makes access to the world of the novel possible in the first place but also defines it to a large extent. The masks with whom Balzac opens his *Splendeurs et misères des courtisanes* are, one might say, the epitome of observing characters, instruments of the observation that plays a key role in the poetics of the realistic novel, the represented world, and its representation.

It is no surprise, therefore, to discover that Balzac can explicitly thematize such a social structure. As an example, we quote a narratorial com-

comment during the description of life in Saumur in the novel *Eugénie Grandet*:

> Une ménagère n'achète pas une perdrix sans que les voisins demandent au mari si elle était cuite à point. Une jeune fille ne met pas la tête à la fenêtre sans y être vue par tous les groupes inoccupés. Là donc les consciences sont à jour, de même que ces maisons impénétrables, noires et silencieuses n'ont point de mystère. La vie est presque toujours en plein air: chaque ménage s'assied à sa porte, y déjeune, y dîne, s'y dispute. Il ne passe personne dans la rue qui ne soit étudié[28].

Life out of doors has no obvious purpose other than to make possible the reciprocal observation in which everyone observes everyone else and by means of which social life itself takes concrete form. To be sure, Balzac does not display the systematic employment of figural narration that is so typical of Stendhal and Flaubert, but his novels nonetheless contain the omnipresent observation structure that is a key component of realistic narration and an important prerequisite of the technique of focalization that first appears in its proper form in the writings of the realist movement[29].

The main benefit which Balzac gains from using an authorial narrator instead of the technique of figural narration is the ability to generalize. This can be seen even without moving beyond the extracts which we have already discussed. The closing lines of our quotation from the opening of *La Cousine Bette*, for example, read: "Les portiers de Paris ont le coup d'œil savant, ils n'arrêtent point les gens décorés, vêtus de bleu, à démarche pesante; enfin ils connaissent les riches." By not making the porter the bearer of a singular process of perception in the sense of focalization, by sidestepping, one might say, the representation of the implied individual situation, Balzac is able to derive the porter's behaviour from a general regularity and thereby increase its plausibility. The result of this technique is a second-order observation. To use Niklas Luhmann's words, the narrator observes observations and is able to uncover the generalities behind them for that very reason.

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[28] Balzac (1976: 1029f.).

[29] As early as Stanzel, we read accordingly: "In comparison to the two other types (the authorial novel and the first-person novel), the figural type of novel only appears at a relatively late point in the history of the novel: from the second half of the nineteenth century onwards" Stanzel (1964: 39; original version German). In light of Stendhal's work, we may choose to date the emergence of the narrative perspective we are discussing slightly earlier, but the basic validity of Stanzel's judgement is unaffected.

This kind of double observation is also present in a very similar form when figural narration becomes the dominant mode of representation. In Flaubert, for example, it is clear that the narrator's perspective does not coincide with the characters' perspectives. The distance that is placed between them takes on a form that typifies his narratives like no other: irony. Irony, too, measures the particular against something general. The disposition of Flaubert's narrators therefore complements that of Balzac's narrators in terms of what they imply. While Balzac's narrators have the ability to resolve a specific happening into the definition of a general rule, in Flaubert, on the other hand, such a generality is assumed in the characteristics of the individual perception of a character. In both cases, however, we are concerned with a parallel between the behaviour of narrator and characters which allows one perspective to give way to the other. The constituents of the represented world and the constituents of its representation are conceptually analogous in the realistic novel[30].

## 4.

We have already discussed how the phenomenon of focalization, as a typical feature of realistic narration, does not ensure a more "objective" representation than authorial narrators provide, and how it thus cannot be

[30] There is not sufficient space here to examine the wider consequences of this finding for the canonical definitions of realism in literary theory. One of the most familiar definitions of the movement rests on the concept of "reflection." "Reflection" explains the fictional world of the novel as a reproduction of extraliterary social structures in the plots that realistic novels narrate. This once-prominent interpretation of realism has been criticized for good reason and lost a considerable amount of credibility with the general decline in the standing of Marxist thought, if not before. Even so, the idea that "reflection" is a key element of realistic narration should not be rejected out of hand. It can be shown to play a role if we cease to treat it as an analogy between text and society and view it instead as a structural analogy between representation and what is represented, whereby these two entities are made comparable by the category of observation. A further question that presents itself is that of whether the precise, detailed narration that is often cited as a distinctive feature of realism can actually be derived from the antecedent structure formed when what is narrated is subsumed under the conditions of its perception. As already noted, these ideas cannot be pursued in more detail here; even so, it should now be clear what consequences can follow from identifying as a fundamental element of realist poetics the observation structure which integrates representation and what is represented.

uncritically classified as a technique specific to realist representation. In particular, the persistent dependence of figural narration on narratorial introspection into one or more of the participating characters is irreconcilable with "realism" when understood as such. In our study, on the other hand, we have been able to identify a feature of narrative perspective in the classic French novel which is combined with its corresponding category of observation to produce an overlap between the constituents of the narrated world and the structures of their representation. Focalized narration thus seems to correspond to a social model which sees observation as one of its key components. This enables us to explain why figural narration is perfectly able to tolerate the authorial commentary and narratorial interpolation that present a well-known problem if focalized narration is treated as a self-created possession of the empirical and scientific programme of realism. From such a standpoint, every "violation" of narrative perspective made by obvious narratorial comment must be seen as breaking the rules of the programme. If, however, we understand the technique of narrative perspective in the sense described in this essay—as a means of representation which converts the observation structure that defines the represented world into a means of representing it—then there is no longer a contradiction between authorial knowledge and figural perspective. We are dealing with a gradual differentiation rather than an abrupt gap between two different means of narration. The narrator simply puts the finishing touches to what the characters do themselves. He has a superior, but not categorially different, viewpoint, and it is perfectly legitimate to exploit this superiority in commentaries—just as the characters are able to comment on their own observations. Indeed, as we have seen, Balzac's narrator makes every effort to portray *his* insights into the behaviour of the characters as a knowledge that would be equally available to any and all attentive observers. I would argue, furthermore, that such a structure can be seen to suggest a poetics such as that of Flaubert. This is why close attention to detail, supposedly intended to be empirical and realistic, repeatedly turns out to embody an ironic perceptiveness that constantly pursues the weaknesses, large and small, of the characters it analyses. After all, this situation too requires an experienced observer who uses the very distance from which he observes such deficits to expose them.

However, this presents us with another question: why should a social order of this kind, based on constant observation, have come into being at the particular point in time at which it did, the beginning of the nineteenth century. Although we can provide only a very brief outline of the answer

as we approach the end of the discussion in this essay, we should still be able to identify the area where I believe the explanation is to be found. Moral psychology is one of the sources which are drawn on by the poetics of observation; its relevance to the realistic novel has already been explained elsewhere[31]. Realistic narrators, for example, show a practically universal interest in the faults of the characters in their novels, and they repeatedly identify amour-propre as the basic origin of these faults. This characterizes realistic narrators as faithful adherents to the tenets of moral theory. However, it is apparent that they are also indebted to moral theory in a more abstract respect. It is well known that the moralists described human behaviour as an unavoidable charade. The self-love that determines all behaviour requires that this amour-propre must be concealed from others and oneself, and so behaviour inevitably entails deception and self-deception. It follows that anyone who wants to know the truth about others, to gain insight into the real motives behind what they do, must observe them carefully and refuse to accept external appearances. In the world of moral psychology, permanent, one might say sharpened, observation is the necessary response to the near-synonymy of behaviour and theatre. It is therefore superficially plausible to take the principles of moral psychology and use them to derive the observation structure which we have shown to be an essential part of the realistic novel. However, citing moral psychology as a key source of the poetics of realistic perception is not enough to explain the historical factors which made the realistic novel appear when it did. Close connections between the novel and moral theory developed as early as the seventeenth century, as readers of the *Princesse de Clèves* quickly discover. Mme de Lafayette's narrative structure, however, is of a completely different kind and does not leave much scope for focalization. Why, then, we must ask, is it only in the nineteenth century that a technique of representation is developed which draws on the resources of moral psychology?

For this reason, I would argue that the historical aspect of the emergence of the new technique of representation must be explained in terms of a second, additional factor. To do so, we must take into account an aspect of the realist model of reality which is less prominent in the psychology of the moralists. The basic assumptions of the latter concern the individual, and their theories revolve around the behavioural disposition

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[31] On Stendhal, see for example Matzat (1990: chap. III, 133ff.).

of the individual. Thus, when they come to consider the individual's interaction with others, they assume that communication is determined by the relationships between individuals. The realistic novel, on the other hand, places special emphasis on the relationship between the individual and the social community; indeed, it treats the narration of the story in which the individual characters participate as an analysis of a social life which cannot be reduced to the sum of the behaviour of each of its individual members. The concept behind Balzac's *Comédie humaine* is arguably the most significant expression of this association between narration and social analysis. By drawing the figure of social determinism from biology, the work's *Avant-propos* makes anthropology secondary to sociology—when the biological model is transferred to humans, it is more or less inevitable that the natural environment will be replaced by a social context, namely, the context of other humans. This dominance of society over the individual is equally apparent, even if without the same scientific pretensions, at the beginning of *Le Rouge et le Noir*, where it is only through the analysis of the community of Verrières that the participants in subsequent events come into view. The situation is, in fact, no different from many of Balzac's other novels which begin by outlining a milieu inside the activity of which the narrator sets the plot in motion. For two of the many examples which could be cited to illustrate this point, the reader is referred to the opening of *Eugénie Grandet* discussed above, where the text begins with a depiction of life in Saumur, and *Père Goriot*, which opens with a famous description of the shabby Pension Vauquer.

If the importance of the community outweighs individual activity to this extent, we need to explain how a society can come into being in the first place. And it is in precisely this context, I believe, that we will find the true significance of the structure of mutual observation which we have identified as the force which binds representation with what is represented[32]. It is of considerable importance that observation is clearly con-

[32] With its significance for the construction of the realistic novel, I would argue that the category of observation establishes a connection between the social order which such novels model and the scientific approach which has also been seen as typical of them. The relationship between science and the novel marks what is, for the time being at least, one of the most curious aspects of realistic narration, which connects scientific discourse with is antitype, fictional discourse. Looking back on the development of the novel in the nineteenth century, a project such as Zola's *Rougon-Macquart* cycle would seem to provide further confirmation of the rather extraordinary nature of the

nected with the search for regularities: it seeks the generalities in which the individual participates, the togetherness on which a society rests. To name just two of the functions which these assumed regularities have in guiding observation, they can assist in the identification of unknown people, or they can serve to judge the behaviour of people (e.g. ironically). Observation is thus the medium with which assumed regularities can be detected and simultaneously the medium in which they are put into use.

I believe that, even though a good many sociological theories define societies largely as societies of observers, the significance of observation as a category which creates society varies in importance depending on the particular social order in question. Observation has a special place, I would argue, in the context of a specific social model: the Enlightenment's model of the social contract. Once the social order ceases to present itself as a substantial entity ordained by a transcendent or natural force and is based instead on the mutual agreement of those who come together in it, observation acquires a special status as vigilance. It has this significance because the survival of order in such a society requires that all its members subscribe to, respect, and observe it. In such a case, the

marriage of science and the art of fiction, for the objective which it sets itself is none other than that of verifying genetic theorems in the medium of fictional texts. (This curiosity probably becomes historically plausible only against the background of the assumption that the novel was already established as a reliable medium of social analysis in Balzac's work. This ultimately means that the correlation of novel and genetic theory is conceived of as a transformation *inside* the context of the reality-representing novel.) The nature of the relationship between science and the novel varies considerably. In Balzac, as in Zola, it involves appropriating a biological model (a different one is involved in each case) with which to regulate the narration. In Flaubert, on the other hand, it serves far more as an ethical disposition which controls the representation. The connection of science and the novel is nonetheless astonishing from the perspective of genre history. In fact, it may have its basis in the category of observation which we have discussed in this essay. There can be no doubt that observation is an essential component of the empirical—and that means observing—discipline that we know as modern science. Observation, though, as we have seen, is also a key requirement of the social order which is represented in the realistic novel. To this extent, the behaviour displayed by characters in realistic narratives opens the way for analysis, for observation cannot operate without a certain level of critical gaze. To this extent, the analytical achievement of the narrator, which we can see as binding narration and science, is made possible by the social order of the novel.

subjects and guardians of order are one and the same thing[33]. To this extent, observation is certainly not based on curiosity, even if it be theoretical curiosity[34]. Its function is far more fundamental and lies in preserving society itself.

Instead of being the origin of the social contract, curiosity is actually a direct result of it, and is so in a way that, far from being reflected with any prominence in Enlightenment thought, is of great importance during the nineteenth century. If a social order is based on a contract and, as follows from the implications of such a model, rests on the free choice of individuals to participate in it, it must be possible for widely varying agreements to be formed. It is just such a variety of different ways of life, which at times seems almost excessive, that is characteristic of the realistic novel. The provincial cannot understand the Parisian metropolis, and the city-dweller responds to the customs of the provinces with just as little understanding[35]. In the context of such diverse social orders, observation

33 Beaumarchais's comedy *Le Mariage de Figaro* is a particularly effective example of a plot which is constructed on this basis. The plot of Mozart's opera, and indeed of the play itself, is structured and driven primarily by a permanent suspicion which makes everyone observe everyone else, whereby all the observers are themselves always under suspicion. This gives rise to permanent mutual observation.

34 Balzac's work contains a series of effective examples which demonstrate that curiosity, in the very specific sense of an interest in what is curious, can produce observation in the realistic novel (one might see it, moreover, as the initial motivation of the character of the traveller). A representative case can be found in the beginning of *Eugénie Grandet*, where antiquarian curiosity is a not insignificant reason for the interest of the town of Saumur in the Loire valley: "Des habitations trois fois séculaires y sont encore solides, quoique construites en bois, et leurs divers aspects contribuent à l'originalité qui recommande cette partie de Saumur à l'attention des antiquaires et des artistes. Il est difficile de passer devant ces maisons sans admirer les énormes madriers dont les bouts sont taillés en figures bizarres et qui couronnent d'un bas-relief noir le rez-de-chaussée de la plupart d'entre elles" Balzac (1977: 1027f.).

35 Two examples of this will suffice. The first is from Stendhal's *Le Rouge et le Noir* and demonstrates the Parisian's distance from provincial life: "Dans le fait, ces gens sages y exercent le plus ennuyeux *despotisme*; c'est à cause de ce vilain mot que le séjour des petites villes est insupportable pour qui a vécu dans cette grande république qu'on appelle Paris" Stendhal (1952: 222). Concerning the appropriate understanding of the story to be told, we read at the beginning of Balzac's *Le Père Goriot* that "non que cette histoire soit dramatique dans le sens vrai du mot; mais, l'œuvre accomplie, peut-être aura-t-on versé quelques larmes *intra muros et extra*. Sera-t-elle comprise au-delà de Paris? Le doute est permis. Les particularités de cette scène pleine d'observations et de couleurs locales ne peuvent être appréciées qu'entre les buttes de Montmartre et les

acquires a key role in the way that strangers approach an unfamiliar environment. It is assigned the task of discovering the customs and regularities of unfamiliar social orders, of which there are bound to be many. The social model which results from the Enlightenment's idea of the social contract thus provides the context for the combination of the various aspects of observation which we have identified in the realistic novel. Observation facilitates both judgement on the basis of what is familiar and the investigation of the unknown regularities of unfamiliar social bodies.

## 5.

We shall now conclude by summarizing the implications of the preceding discussion for the systematic description of narration, in other words, for narratology. What are the consequences for narrative theory if a historically well-defined mode of representation which is very narrow and emerges at a very late point in time is not actually a distinct kind of narration but ultimately a hybrid product that is well able to tolerate the violation of some premisses of narration? Focalization, I suggest, is a paradigmatic example of just such a mode of narration. The fact that the discourse of perception essentially consists far more of description than of narration makes it is easy to see that perception and narration are not universally equivalent[36]. Discrepancies between narration and observation also occur, however, because of the different temporal structure which each implies. Narration is retrospective in nature: it organizes time by moving backwards from the end of what has happened. Observation, on the other hand, is forward-looking; thus, it does not function in pursuit of an objective but, precisely because it does not know any such objective, finds its way as it goes. These are just some aspects of the not particularly straightforward relationship between perception and narration which means that all focalization is really a hybrid structure. Considered in this way, the technique of narrative perspective should be seen not as a natural

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hauteurs de Montrouge, dans cette illustre vallée de plâtras incessamment près de tomber et de ruisseaux noirs de boue" Balzac (1977: 49f.). In this case, the differentiation between the different ways of life does not stop simply at the distinction between Paris and the provinces: the capital itself is presented in such a way that it is dissected into a network of different social forms between which mutual understanding exists.

[36] On the relationship between narration and description, see the long-established fundamental study by Wolf-Dieter Stempel: Stempel (1973).

variant of narration but as a way of transferring narration to another kind of foundation. That new foundation is perception, which depends on a series of premisses that are markedly and often substantially different from those of narration[37]. Strictly speaking, therefore, the only kind of focalization which is truly native to narration as such is that which Genette refers to as zero focalization.

What conclusions can we draw from this state of affairs? It would clearly be somewhat misguided to respond to our findings by declaring that the classic realistic novels—which we know in many ways as classics of the art of narration itself—should be typologically banished from the category of narration for the sake of theoretical narratological consistency. We should look instead for less immediately obvious lessons that narratology can draw from our findings. I would argue, for example, that the discourse type of narration cannot be defined adequately by means of a disjunct class of features. It is rather the case that real narratives always contain a special combination of narrative and other discursive processes. One could say that narratives contain something like a narrative core—perhaps, indeed, the minimal model of a sequence of causally connected events—which is surrounded by a number of techniques from other discourse types which are combined with it. The premisses of these other discourse types can be completely unrelated to those of the narrative nucleus. What I call the elasticity of narration, its *structural* potential to be combined with other discourse types, is, I would argue, just as characteristic of narration as the narrative nucleus which constitutes its generic distinctive feature. It follows that narrative speech is typified by the coexistence of a minimal unit which contains the indispensable components of all narration and an outer shell which allows a whole range of different discourse types to be integrated into the narrative. Only by assuming two such different structural levels, I propose, can we explain the diversity of the material which is covered by the lemma 'narrative,' from Homer to the *nouveau nouveau roman* and from Hesiod to the academic historiography of the present day.

[37] Although we cannot consider it here, we should note that the question now arises as to whether all focalization ultimately stems from a hybrid of narration and description.

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# On the Relationship between the Theory of the Novel, Narrative Theory, and Narratology†

One of the most striking features of the literature on the history of narratology is its failure to decide which of several competing models most accurately represents the development of the discipline. The first approach to demand our attention argues that there is a close connection between narratology and the widespread adoption of structuralism in the 1960s. It is even possible to identify the eighth issue of the periodical Communications as the 'genesis'[1] and birthplace of narratology; it was published in 1966 and devoted to the theme of 'L'analyse structurale du récit'. Three years later, in his *Grammaire du Décaméron*, Tzvetan Todorov takes on the role of father-figure, not only naming but also founding a new science: "Cet ouvrage relève d'une science qui n'existe pas encore, disons la NARRATOLOGIE, la science du récit."[2] A more complex analysis of the history of narratology is put forward in the three-phase model. It distin-

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† To assist the reader in relating this essay to the German theoretical literature, the original German forms of four key terms are as follows: 'theory of the novel' = *Romantheorie*, 'narrative theory' = *Erzähltheorie*, 'narratology' = *Narratologie*, and 'narrative research' = *Erzählforschung*.

1 Jahn (1995: 29).

2 Todorov (1969: 10).

guishes a prestructuralist period, which lasted until the mid-1960s, a high structuralist period, which ended in the late 1980s, and a poststructuralist period of revival, revision, and inter- and cross-disciplinary expansion[3]. Narratology, it is argued, is now more alive than ever before[4], having undergone something of a renaissance since the 1990s[5] after a period of stagnation and crisis[6] during which its demise was repeatedly proclaimed[7]. The 1990s produced such a proliferation of heterogeneous approaches that narratologists such as David Herman find it more appropriate to speak of 'narratologies' in the plural[8]. It is now standard practice to distinguish between a (structuralist or structuralist-inspired) classical period, which is generally considered obsolete, and a postclassical period, which is still very much alive.

Plausible as it may seem at first sight, linking narratology and structuralism presents us with an inconvenient problem—what is the status of works which deal with problems of narrative theory but were published prior to the 1960s? They must either be classified as precursors of varying significance, or perhaps just stimuli for future critics, or be described as "pioneering contribution[s] to the prestructuralist systematization of narrative techniques and narrative styles"[9]. Franz Stanzel's writings in particular are not easily assigned to either category[10]. However, the

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3 Cf. Ryan/van Alphen (1993); Nünning (1997), (1998); Nünning/Nünning (2002).

4 "Narratology today seems to be more alive then ever," Fludernik (1993: 730).

5 See Nünning/Nünning (2002: 1f.): On the reasons for this renaissance, in which narratology "not only rose like a phoenix from the ashes but was also transformed into a forward-looking discipline when it absorbed the concepts and methods of other literary and cultural theories" (original version German).

6 See Rimmon-Kenan (1989).

7 "In recent years the discipline of narratology has frequently been pronounced 'dead,' irrelevant, or 'out,'" Fludernik (1993: 729). Cf. also "Introduction: Narratology, Death and Afterlife," in Currie (1998: 1–14).

8 See Herman (1999). On the diversity of contemporary narratological theories, cf. also Grünzweig/Solbach (1999); Fludernik (2000); Nünning (2000); and the more recent systematic description in Nünning/Nünning (2002).

9 Nünning (1997: 514) (original version German); see also Nünning (1998: 131); Nünning/Nünning (2002: 6).

10 Jahn (1995) distinguishes an early Stanzel (30), represented by *Die Typischen Erzählsituationen* and *Typische Formen des Romans*, from the Stanzel of the *Theorie des Erzählens*, who, "without completely abandoning the concept of narrative situations," also "crosses over into the paradigm of structuralist narratology" (38; original version German).

weaknesses of the three-phase model are not confined to its implications for older works. As early as 1976, Wolfgang Haubrichs described three major classes with which he intended to capture “the diversity of contemporary trends in narrative studies,”[11] in his system, analyses and theories based on structuralism represent just one of several approaches. On the other hand, we must not forget that the remarkable success of structuralism meant that, in one way or another, even theorists who did not subscribe to it (such as Stanzel and Lämmert) had to define their work in terms of it[12]. This is what Stanzel had in mind when he wrote in his ‘Rückblick’ of 1992 that his theory had found the refinement it needed when it was “doused in the acid of structuralism”[13]. In this same article, however, Stanzel also shows a hint of satisfaction when he observes that this “structuralization”[14] did not turn out to be quite so significant after all:

> It is easy to see that I was highly taken by the rigorous abstractions of the system that had emerged at the time; now, twenty years later, this impression is tempered by a mild surprise at how eager I was to demonstrate my enthusiasm for what was really just a fashionable trend in our field of study. Looking back, though, I find my conscience somewhat relieved when I see that, despite that eagerness, a number of my critics see my position as no more than that of a ‘low structuralist’[15].

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11 Haubrichs (1976a: 8) (original version German). Baum (1977) approaches the situation from a linguistic point of view and proposes a different classification from that of Haubrichs. Baum divides narratological methods into language-based and model-based approaches, further subdividing the latter into structuralist, generativist, and communication-based approaches.

12 See Lindner/Pfister (1980) on the reception of structuralism in Germany.

13 “I was not entirely displeased when the arrival of structuralism was followed by a demand for more rigorous systematization and a greater conceptual transparency in our assumptions. When my idealized typical narrative situations were doused in the acid of structuralism, they were purified so that—not least to the surprise of their creator—it was considerably easier to see the underlying theoretical framework of their specific forms. It was now apparent that each of the three typical narrative situations was one of the two poles in a separate binary opposition” Stanzel (1992: 427f.) (original version German).

14 Stanzel (1992: 428) (original version German).

15 Stanzel (1992: 428) (original version German). The phrase ‘low structuralism’ was coined by Scholes (1974: 157) to describe Gérard Genette.

In 2002, ten years later, Stanzel again shows himself perfectly satisfied with this low structuralist position[16]. Similarly, Eberhard Lämmert feels compelled—likewise in a retrospective appraisal—to state his position on structuralism:

> We can now see the true nature of what, newly encouraged by Roman Ingarden and René Wellek, gave rise to productive studies in narrative theory and dramatic technique and finally culminated in Käte Hamburger's outstanding *Logik der Dichtung*: a prestructuralism whose complications were not felt until later decades[17].

As soon as the next sentence, however, Lämmert appears to express the conviction that critical history will come to see the situation in its true light:

> Yet here too, history will one day assert its right and acknowledge the precursors of the liberation—as we saw it then—which opened the way towards a new scientism in literary criticism. These predecessors will be found as early as Walzel and Wölfflin—even, indeed, in Petsch's work on the main poetic genres[18].

Another view of the history of narratology, which we shall refer to as the dual paradigm model, operates on the basis of two more or less clearly distinct traditions: first, a structuralist narratology; second, a tradition of narrative theory pursued by German-speaking theorists and represented by figures such as Käte Friedemann, Robert Petsch, Günther Müller, Wolfgang Kayser, Eberhard Lämmert, and Franz Stanzel. The central point of Bernhard Paukstadt's study of 1980 is the contrastive juxtaposition of the structuralist paradigm against what he refers to as "narrative research in the humanities". As early as his introduction, Paukstadt maintains that, while structuralism has consolidated its position in narrative research, it has by no means rendered its predecessors irrelevant, despite what we would expect from the application of Thomas Kuhn's paradigm concept: "The paradigm *shift* has occurred neither in literary theory in general nor in narrative research in particular"[19]. Older approaches coexist

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[16] See Stanzel (2002), especially the chapter "'Low Structuralists': G. Genette – F. K. Stanzel – Dorrit Cohn," in which Stanzel sees himself as a low structuralist participating in an ongoing dialogue with two other low structuralists, Genette and Cohn. See also the chapter "Erzähltheorie und/oder Narratologie" on the possibility of dividing the theoretical workload between narrative theory and narratology.

[17] Lämmert (1996: 415f.) (original version German).

[18] Ibid.

[19] Paukstadt (1980: 2) (original version German).

alongside newer theories, and, "in specialized investigations, theories from both paradigms are combined in series and in parallel"[20].

Thomas H. Leech examines the theories of Ernst Hirt, Robert Petsch, Eberhard Lämmert, and Franz Stanzel in his 1985 dissertation; he too treats the theories of these German-speaking critics "as a distinct tradition"[21]. While Hirt and Petsch are of no more than historical interest for Leech[22], he argues that Lämmert and Stanzel can justifiably be considered relevant to the present-day theoretical debate[23]. Finally, David Darby's 2001 essay presents a comparison of "two distinct traditions of narrative theory: on the one hand that of structuralist narratology as it emerged in the 1960s [...]; on the other, that of German-language *Erzähltheorie* as codified in the 1950s"[24]. Darby's key concern is to explain why struc-

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20 Ibid.

21 Leech (1985: 3).

22 "The first two narrative theorists discussed in this study—Hirt and Petsch—are of essentially historical interest. Their approaches lack the clarity of articulation and the internal consistency that would enable even a tentative application as an interpretative procedure in present-day literary analysis" Leech (1985: 416). Leech (1985) identifies Hirt's primary achievement as his anticipation of the distinction between narrative time and narrated time: "Hirt's primary contribution to the analytical inventory of *Erzähltheorie* lies in his tentative exploration of the distinction between narrative time and narrated time. Here he anticipates Müller's and Lämmert's use of this contrast" (417). Leech is not alone in finding that Petsch makes for unpalatable reading because of his growing sympathies with National Socialism, even before the revised second edition of *Wesen und Formen der Erzählkunst* (1942). Nonetheless, he does credit Petsch with thematizing the indirectness of narration: "Petsch's general approach can make even less claim than Hirt's to validity in a present-day context. Petsch's confused remarks on the necessity of a *Handlung* or *Ereigniskette* foreshadow Lämmert's references to the presence of a series of events as a *Gattungsspezifikum* of narrative, while the emphasis placed in *Wesen und Formen der Erzählkunst* on a personal narrator anticipates Stanzel's use of this quality as a generic criterion" (418). Leech also casts a critical eye on the apparently direct link between Petsch and his successors, Lämmert and Stanzel.

23 "Their approach is far more rigorous than that of either Hirt or Petsch. The conceptual precision of Lämmert and the ingenuity of Stanzel, together with their ability to identify clearly the formal textual features they discuss, lend the approaches of these theorists considerable relevance for present-day poetics and interpretation" Leech (1985: 420).

24 Darby (2001: 829). Darby proposes that only with the paradigm of structuralist narratology and its symmetrical narrative communication situation of "real," implicit, and fictional intelligences did it become theoretically and conceptually possible to thematize questions of authorship and reading. Kindt/Müller (2003) provide a critique of this

turalist narratology alone, unlike the German-language tradition of narrative theory, has proved compatible with contextualist narratology[25]. Patrick O'Neill also bases his account on the existence of two clearly separated traditions. However, he does not set the structuralist paradigm in opposition to German-speaking narrative theory; instead, he sees it in contrast to two kinds of formalism: a semiotic formalism, which extends from the Russian formalists of the 1920s to French and American deconstructivism, and an aesthetic formalism, in which O'Neill includes new criticism, the work of Stanzel and Lämmert, and work-internal interpretations[26].

Monika Fludernik seems to prefer a continuity model. She dates the emergence of narratology emphatically earlier, treating it as

> dating back to the fifties (in Germany) and sixties (in France and the U.S.) with the founding fathers (and two mothers) Käte Hamburger, Eberhard Lämmert and Franz Stanzel, Tzvetan Todorov, Roland Barthes and Gérard Genette, Wayne C. Booth, and in the seventies, Seymour Chatman, Dorrit Cohn and Gerald Prince[27].

The following discussion, which is comprised of two parts, takes a different approach to developments in the German-speaking regions. In the first part, which covers the situation up to the 1950s, we consider the nature of the problems that provided the initial stimulus for the investigation of questions of narrative theory. These problems, we argue, emerged first and foremost as a result of changes in the critical attitude to and evaluation of the novel[28]. The study of questions of narrative theory was also encouraged by new methodological positions which gave greater prominence to issues of form and structure. We shall concentrate on the critical debate among German-speaking theorists, but this tradition was by no

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thesis and the idea that the theoretical construct of the implied author is the only point of contact between the world of the text and the extratextual circumstances outside it. See Fludernik 2003 for an appraisal of Darby's evaluation of the German-language tradition of narrative theory.

25 See Chatman (1990) on the concept of contextualist narratology.

26 See O'Neill (1996: 3–15).

27 Fludernik (2000: 83f.). In this footnote, Fludernik names Henry James, Percy Lubbock, and Käte Friedemann as precursors of narratology; she notes, however, that they had not yet accumulated the "critical mass of a new discipline."

28 As if to support this thesis, Stanzel (2002: 26) writes: "The first stimulus of any lasting effect to suggest examining the different (typical) forms of narration was provided by the endless debate in the first half of the twentieth century surrounding the *true* form of the novel" (original version German).

means the only one which responded to the new questions, concentrated on the novel as the dominant narrative form, and used it as a theoretical and methodological testing ground for more far-reaching, generalizing hypotheses about narration[29]. And indeed, it is perfectly possible that narrative theory could profit from treating questions of narrative within the framework of the theory of the novel. However, when evaluating the problem-solving potential of approaches which stem from the past or are no longer considered viable, we must always consider their wider context and the problems which they were designed to handle before we can be sure of any potential benefits they may have to offer.

In the second part of our investigation, which treats the late 1950s, we devote special attention to the shift from narrative theory to narratology. This development took place in several stages and was accompanied by a corresponding increase in terminological complexity. The theory of the novel was not displaced in the process but rather continues to exist as a common frame of reference for narrative research, narrative studies, narrative theory, and narratology.

[29] The contributions in German are seen as part of a wider group of related European and American works. For Müller, Kayser, Lämmert, and Stanzel, the post-1945 international frame of reference was provided by works such as those of Percy Lubbock (*The Craft of Fiction* [1921]), E. M. Forster (*Aspects of the Novel* [1927]), Edwin Muir (*The Structure of Fiction* [1928]), Jean Pouillon (*Temps et roman* [1946]), and Abraham A. Mendilow (*Time and the Novel* [1952]). Culler (1980) points out that even before the adoption of structuralism, the novel was the subject of a significant theoretical tradition in the United States. Culler argues that this tradition begins with the publication of Henry James's prefaces, continues through Lubbock, and extends as far as Wayne C. Booth's *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (1961), and that its focus consists above all of techniques and theories of point of view. See Lodge (1980) on the situation in England. Wallace Martin (1987) argues that questions of the theory of the novel dominated discussions of literary theory until they were eclipsed by structuralism in the mid-1960s. Even today in Germany, according to Grünzweig/Solbach (1999: 3), the novel is "mythologized or re-constructed as a sacrosanct way of giving meaning to the world we live in" and "subsumed under the category of the theory of the novel," with the result that "narratological analysis still has significant hurdles to overcome in this country" (original version German).

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In the second half of the nineteenth century, or at least not later than the beginning of the twentieth century, the novel came to be recognized as an autonomous and significant artistic literary genre. It was raised, as Thomas Mann wrote in retrospect in 1939, "to the representative art form of the age"[30]. Similarly, the Reallexikon of 1928–29 notes that "the novel is the artistic form of a new age in that the richness of its creative potential reflects the activity, the colour, and the intellectual variety of modern life"[31]. According the novel this status, however, brought to the fore a problem that had previously been easily ignored in most cases: how can we find order in the chaotic diversity of forms in which the novel is known to us, and how can we obtain a description of its defining characteristics? There were many attempts to classify the novel according to criteria of theme or content, but these proved to be of little value—frequently, the lists that were suggested could be extended at will to such an extent that they soon lost most, if not all, of their classificatory value.

Bruno Hillebrand argues that what he aptly calls a "typological trend" began to develop in German literary criticism from the early twentieth century onwards as a "logical response to such great variety": "Given the multitude of historical facts and associations, it was almost inevitable that the need for a strict theory of form emerged"[32]. According to Hillebrand, this trend then asserted an "increasingly independent identity" as it evolved in the work of Robert Petsch, Wolfgang Kayser, Günther Müller, and finally Eberhard Lämmert[33]. This development, described as a "formalist trend" by Jost Hermand[34], began to take shape around 1910 as an increase in the methodological diversity of German literary criticism. In 1928, Oskar Benda published a short text called *Der gegenwärtige Stand der deutschen Literaturwissenschaft*[35]. It describes a number of different approaches, "which—with the exception of those of tribal and racial the-

[30] Mann [1939] (1990: 359) (original version German).
[31] Grellmann (1928–29: 65) (original version German).
[32] Hillebrand (1993: 27f.) (original version German).
[33] Ibid.: 12 (original version German).
[34] Original version German. See the chapter "Der formalistische Trend" in Hermand (1969).
[35] Benda (1928).

ory—continue to define our subject today"[36]. Benda cites literary research into formal aesthetics (represented by Fritz Strich and Oskar Walzel) and the intellectual history approach as the two most significant movements in the emerging methodological pluralism. The former produced a rapidly growing body of stylistic research and a movement which was variously described with such terms as "the aesthetics of form," "the poetics of form," or "the formalism of German literary criticism". Benda sees "the revival of interest in the ideas of form and literary genre" as one of its most important achievements[37].

We can identify Oskar Walzel as the most important figure behind the rise of the aesthetics of form. For Dieter Burdorf, "Walzel's work on the concept of form in literary theory sets a standard of methodological reflection and understanding of the historical background to the issues that has not been bettered to this day"[38]. For Walzel, a work of literature, like any other work of art, is governed by its own internal logic. When studying it, he argues, we must concentrate above all on its form and ignore all external factors, for the latter are not the concern of literature. In the search for an appropriate terminology, Walzel adopts "sharing insights between the arts" as his motto and aligns himself with Heinrich Wölfflin's work on the history of art: "Above all, we in the literary world need to find our own equivalent of Wölfflin's categories"[39]. Walzel summarizes his programme effectively when he writes: "At every stage, I strive to find a higher mathematics of form, and the essence of my quest is to discover the architecture behind the art of words"[40]. Walzel counters po-

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36 Voßkamp (1990: 241) (original version German).

37 Benda (1928) (original version German). The attempt to make the work itself and its linguistic form the main object of attention, disconnecting them from contextual factors such as history or biography, is not peculiar to Germany; the aesthetics of form shares this approach with other schools and movements such as Russian formalism, the French *explication de text*, the English scrutiny school, and new criticism in the United States.

38 Burdorf (2001: 418f.) (original version German). On Walzel, see Burdorf (2001: 415–29); Salm (1970); Naderer (1992); Schmitz (2000). On formal poetics, see also Martínez (1996).

39 Walzel (1917: 41) (original version German).

40 Walzel (1924: 103) (original version German). See in particular Striedter (1994: liii-lv) on speculation that Walzel influenced the Russian formalists or can be seen as their predecessor. Dolezel (1973) investigates earlier links to Russian literary theorists which are largely forgotten due to the significance of Walzel. (We are indebted to Mat-

tential criticism for being dogmatically committed to the aesthetics of form by saying that “I have no wish to promote one-sided formalism; my aim is to do justice to form and substance alike”[41]. This statement, which sets Walzel’s work apart from purely formalist studies, is important because it contains ideas of wholeness from organic aesthetics[42]. Shape and substance interlock to create the wholeness of a self-contained work of art in words. More than anything else, the blueprint metaphor bears the mark of organic thought. The metaphor is based on the idea that every work of art, and by extension every literary text, has an internal logic which determines its shape according to a particular blueprint, and that this blueprint specifies the functional place of each part of the work in the overall structure. From a formal point of view, then, the analysis of the individual work can be understood as structural analysis[43], it differs from structuralism, however, in that its main purpose is to determine the constructive parts of the work, their functions, and how they are integrated into an organic whole. The individual work is thus the focus of this kind of formal

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thias Aumüller for drawing our attention to Dolezel (1973). See also Walzel’s posthumously published autobiography (1956), in which he describes visits to Leningrad and Moscow. Elish/Asher (1994: 350) identify Walzel and Emil Ermatinger as precursors of René Wellek and Austin Warren’s 1949 *Theory of Literature*.

41 Walzel (1923: 146) (original version German). See also the following later remark in the foreword to Walzel (1926): “I must state explicitly that for this reason I cannot allow myself to be made out as a critic who has no time for anything except the form of literature. On several occasions in *Gehalt und Gestalt*, I have already repudiated the allegation that I am concerned with nothing but formalism” (original version German).

42 This may help explain Walzel’s tendency to avoid the terms ‘form’ and ‘content’ (German *Form* and *Inhalt*) and his increasing use of the terms ‘shape’ and ‘substance’ (German *Gestalt* and *Gehalt*), both coined by Goethe, from the 1920s onward. See also the chapter “‘Gestalt’ oder ‘Gehalt’? Kontroversen um Oskar Walzels literarische Stilforschung” in Simonis (2001).

43 Cf. Lämmert (1996: 415): “Through Günther Müller we learnt to see poems and prose texts as linguistic entities with their own distinctive meanings, and it was he that gave us standards with which to compare and objectivize our intuitive responses to what we read. But when we judged through intuitive perception, we were simply copying Goethe; even the first attempts to find the theoretical justification for a typology of literary genres took place against the background of Emil Staiger’s work. We were transfixed by Goethe when we spoke of ‘shape’ when we should have said ‘structure’ or simply ‘form,’ and that, initially at least, limited the potential of our search for new concepts” (original version German).

analysis[44]. It might be thought that, by concentrating on each work in isolation, Walzel prevents us from identifying the general and timeless similarities which a given work of art shares with other works and which we can use to assemble typological catalogues. Yet this impression is misleading, for "listing such types provides us with a more effective way of capturing key features of works of art"[45]. These ideas struck a chord in the Germany of the 1920s and 1930s, for the construction of typologies of shape and form seemed to hold considerable promise as a way for the theory of the novel to identify the basic structures, principles, and forms of the novel.

In Germany, an early stimulus for the discussion of narrative theory was provided by the work of Otto Ludwig and Friedrich Spielhagen[46]. However, the debate at that time was still heavily influenced by questions of technique in the novel. The breakthrough came only in 1910, when Käte Friedemann, one of Walzel's students, published *Die Rolle des Erzählers in der Epik*, in which she mediates between technique in the novel and the aesthetics of form[47]. For Walzel, Friedemann's work was "the most powerful attempt to assert the legitimacy of the true, narrating narrative in the face of Spielhagen's claims," and he cites the views of Georg Wittkowski, for whom Friedemann's book represents "the best available text on the technique of the novel"[48]. From the beginning, in her foreword, Friedemann makes clear that she is concerned with questions of the aesthetics of form as defined by Walzel and that she considers the "study of form" as one of the "most central tasks" of literary criticism: "The artist's intention is to be read directly out of the form of a work of art"[49]. With a single sentence, Friedemann brushes aside attempts to separate the epic from the novel: "Again and again, countless such definitions [of the novel] mistake theory for history in their underlying founda-

44 This feature links narrative theory with work-internal interpretation, which, however, found stronger support in the methods of new criticism after 1945.
45 Walzel (1923: 10) (original version German).
46 Ludwig (1891); Spielhagen [1883] (1967). A comparison of these two early critics can be found in Walzel (1915–19).
47 Friedemann [1910] (1969). Friedemann's work seems to have found little recognition when it first appeared. "One of the few to have any idea of what could really be achieved using Käte Friedemann's book" was Richard Müller-Freienfels; see Walzel (1915–17: 167; original version German). See also Müller-Freienfels (1913: 364–66).
48 Walzel (1915–19: 167) (original version German).
49 Friedemann [1910] (1969: viii) (original version German).

tions"[50]. Novel and epic alike belong to the narrative genre. Friedemann aims to show that "the essence of the epic form lies specifically in the existence of a narrator who asserts his presence"[51] but is not identical with the empirical author. Friedemann explains the mediating activity of this self-asserting narrator in terms of transcendental philosophy: the narrator

> symbolizes the epistemological theory, introduced by Kant, according to which we see the world not as it is in and of itself, but rather as it is encountered by an observing intellect. It is through this intellect that the world of facts is split into subject and object when we perceive it[52].

Friedemann goes on to draw the key conclusion that 'what is "real" in the epic sense of the word is not simply the event that is narrated but, more fundamentally, the narration itself'[53]. The theoretical distinction between narrator and empirical author represents one of the fundamental insights of narrative theory[54]. Even in 1954, Wolfgang Kayser is compelled to stress the importance of this distinction for our understanding of the narrator: "This is an insight of fundamental importance for the poetics of the art of narration, and it must not be forgotten again"[55].

In the 1920s and 1930s, Walzel's ideas on the poetics of form and the possibilities of a typology of forms exerted widespread influence and enjoyed seminal status, being applied to all three literary genres[56]. Narration

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50 Ibid.: 15.

51 Friedemann [1910] (1969: 3) (original version German).

52 Ibid.: 26.

53 Ibid.: 25.

54 On poetry, cf. the following distinction made in Margarete Susman's study, which also appeared in 1910: "And thus it can never be the personal I, only the I that lives in the general and eternal nature of existence, that contains space; and this latter I is the lyric I, a form that the poet creates out of his own, given I. This law, which marks the border between art and reality, holds true without modification for all lyric works" Susman (1910: 16; original version German). On Susman, see also Martínez (2001).

55 Kayser (1954: 429) (original version German).

56 Hirt (1923) proposes a typology of forms for all three genres. Petsch also worked on such typologies but went further by commenting on the fairytale as well. According to Fritz Martini, Petsch considered the completion of the second, un-published volume in his typology of the drama (the first volume, *Wesen und Formen des Dramas*, had appeared in 1945) as the "culmination of decades of work that laid the foundations for an aesthetic typology of the lyric, the epic, and the drama" Martini (1953: 289; original version German). See the relevant chapters in Leech (1985) for a further discussion of Hirt and Petsch. There is insufficient space here to consider the ideas of relevance to

itself was identified as the key formal feature shared by all epic forms. It follows that all narrative forms—epics, novels, fairytales, novellas, anecdotes, and so on—can be considered together, and that it is legitimate to search for a principle which is an essential characteristic of each of them. This led to a change in the terminological system, where "the art of narration" was now introduced as an overarching term for all epic forms. In practice, however, the novel and its theory were still the focus of attention, both as objects of study and as data with which to test or demonstrate newly discovered theorems[57]. Even though the school of typology and the aesthetics of form cannot be counted among the dominant products of German literary criticism, it has a number of achievements to its credit. Walzel, for example, sees Petsch's *Wesen und Formen der Erzählkunst* (1934) as the first successful work to elucidate the fundamental principles of the art of narration and provide a fitting equivalent to Gustav Freytag's *Die Technik des Dramas* (1863)[58]. For our purposes, it will be sufficient to cite one further example, the *Theorie des Romans* of Rafael Koskimies (1935)[59], which has been described as "documenting an early formal theory of the novel"[60]. Koskimies could not have made his premisses any clearer when he writes in the chapter entitled "Theorie des Erzählens" that "only in the act of narration, and nothing else, can we find a satisfactory explanation for a general property such as the predominant formal principle of the epic in general and the novel in particular"[61]. Since the historical reconstruction of approaches to narrative theory is not the

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narrative theory which were discussed, for example, in the fairytale analysis of the 1920s and 1930s and in André Jolles's *Einfache Formen* (1930).

57 The realisation that certain questions are beyond the scope not just of the theory of the novel but also of fictional literature can be seen emerging for the first time in Lämmert's *Bauformen des Erzählens* (1955).

58 "For all the criticism that can levelled against Gustav Freytag's *Technik des Dramas*, the fact is that not a single work in German has yet been able to provide a comparable—or even different—summary of the situation in the epic. Petsch, therefore, has every right to refer to his book as the first attempt to provide a unified explanation of the basis, true aims, and workings of the art of narration. It does indeed embody something that has never been attempted before" Walzel (1937: 14; original version German).

59 Even in 1960, the *Theorie des Romans* was still seen by Pabst (1960: 265) as the starting point for studies of the theory of the novel.

60 Hillebrand (1978a: 5) (original version German).

61 Koskimies (1935: 110) (original version German).

concern of this essay, we shall now give no more than brief consideration to the typological theories of Müller, Lämmert, and Stanzel.

For Günther Müller, Walzel's scattered comments and Petsch's writings are at best "effective individual observations on the art of narration" which neither critic succeeded in placing in a "unified comparative context." And even the "most significant recent contribution to the study of the art of narration, Georg Lukács's *Theorie des Romans* [1920]," fails to consider the "true literary forms." Furthermore, Müller argues, these studies all overlook the "simple given fact" that "both the epic and the novel narrate something and that both have the same fundamental position with respect to time." Narration is identified as the basic formal feature on the basis of which a typology can be constructed:

> If we are to discover the laws which shape the art of narration, if we are to advance to creating a typology, we must avoid both collecting a mishmash of unrelated isolated details and deducing literary types from extraliterary contextual factors. Instead, our first undertaking must be to assemble classes by looking closely at what amounts to the equivalent of a vertebrate's spine in the art of narration: narration itself[62].

At the beginning of the 1920s, Müller's work was still preoccupied with Walzel[63], then, from the beginning of the 1940s, he took his lead from Goethe's morphological texts and channelled his efforts into constructing a morphological poetics whose most important components were Goethe's concepts of metamorphosis and type[64]. Müller derives the idea of a temporal skeleton of narration from osteology. Taking the "independence of the laws of narration from what is narrated" and the "the temporal nature of the process of narration" as his premisses[65], Müller identifies the crafting of time as the fundamental principle which shapes a narrative, and he goes on to make the important distinction between narrative time and narrated time:

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62 All quotations Müller (1947: 249f.) (original version German).

63 See Baasner (1996).

64 Müller's programme of morphological literary criticism is reviewed in Staiger (1944). Staiger emphatically rejects Müller's attempt to establish "a new literary criticism" on the basis of Goethe's morphology; he is of "the opposite opinion, namely that German literary criticism actually suffers from being tied too closely to Goethe's concepts and that the concept of the organism in particular has confused our thought and clouded our judgement" (226; original version German). Staiger also rejects the term 'shape' (*Gestalt*) as too visual and calls for it to be replaced by 'style' (227).

65 Bleckwenn (1976: 60) (original version German).

> Now, the crafting of time […] is of fundamental importance to the art of narration. It embodies a compositional factor which enables us to compare all individual works on the basis of a key feature of their overall form, and it thereby allows us to construct morphological lists and classes. And that is the indispensable prerequisite for a typology of the art of narration[66].

At the beginning of the 1950s, the morphological approach declined, and the project of a morphological poetics was practically abandoned without ever having yielded a fully developed typology. Numerous analyses of individual texts were produced by the morphological workgroup in Bonn; they were intended to provide categories and concepts that could be employed in more precise textual interpretations[67].

Only brief mention will be made of Wolfgang Kayser here. His contribution to narrative theory in the 1950s is important for two reasons. First, he relayed and disseminated ideas about textual interpretation which originated in the aesthetics of form; second, he thematized the role of the reader as a presence in the text: "All products of the art of narration—epics, novellas, anecdotes, and so on—have a structure, a reader-role, and a narrator"[68]. Kayser's model is based on the concept of the "archetypical epic situation," in which a narrator tells an audience of listeners what has happened[69]. Both narrator and reader are part of the epic world. Developments in the modern novel, in which the personal presence of a narrator has been (almost) completely eliminated, led Kayser to formulate the dictum (which has strong undertones of cultural criticism) that "the death of the narrator is the death of the novel"[70].

Helga Bleckwenn sees Eberhard Lämmert's *Bauformen des Erzählens* of 1955[71] as a consistent "systematic implementation"[72] of Günther Müller's ideas, while Rainer Baasner grants it an "autonomous position"

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66 Müller (1947: 267) (original version German).

67 See Müller (1950), (1953).

68 Kayser (1956: 193) (original version German).

69 Kayser (1948: 349) (original version German).

70 Kayser (1954: 445) (original version German). In 1957, Kayser refers to Thomas Mann's *Der Erwählte* and postulates that the "spirit of the story" ("Geist der Erzählung"; original version German) is the narratorial instance. This theory is examined critically by Klesczewski (1973).

71 Lämmert's *Bauformen*, which was accepted as a dissertation with the title *Aufbauformen und Fügenmittel des Erzählens* in 1952, emerged from the Bonn morphological workgroup with Günther Müller at its centre.

72 Bleckwenn (1976: 44) (original version German).

which allows "supporters of non-morphological schools of thought to exploit the categories of Lämmert's *Bauformen* in the context of an interpretation of the aesthetics of autonomous works"[73]. For Herman Meyer, the simple fact of the book's existence means that it can claim to be "a kind of organon for the poetics of the art of narration," and there is no doubt that this implicit claim is justified, for Lämmert's *Bauformen* takes "narrative research a considerable step forward"[74]. In the preceding decades, Meyer argues, the "structure of the art of narration" had been analysed in many individual studies which undeniably produced significant results, but the crucial "study of the structure of the art of narration in its entirety" had never appeared[75]. The gap, Meyer believed, was filled by Lämmert. Despite "numerous isolated observations," Lämmert felt, the art of narration was still in a state of confusion when it came to "the principles or categories without which its forms cannot possibly be characterized and classified"[76]. Lämmert sees the cause of this situation in a failure to distinguish questions of literary theory from those of formal typology[77]. Only by clearly separating genres as "guiding historical concepts" from types as "ahistorical constants" can we expect to have any hope of success. Thus, in Lämmert's theory, the "question of the forms of the art of narration"[78] cannot be answered by compiling a list of all the forms which are historically documented. Instead, we must "ascertain the typical forms which are the timeless distinguishing and defining features of narrative literature"[79]. These forms are required to "have the key characteristic of being able to appear in all real and conceivable works of the art of narration;" this immediately prevents any "historical connection" from affecting "the formation of categories"[80]. The classification of these "typical forms can only be achieved by starting with the most general principles of narration,"[81] whereby "the most general structural principle, which the art

[73] Baasner (1996: 263) (original version German).
[74] Meyer (1957–58: 80) (original version German).
[75] Ibid.
[76] Lämmert (1989: 9) (original version German).
[77] As early as 1910, Käte Friedemann had already cited the tendency to "mistake theory for history" as a reason for the failure of attempted definitions; Friedemann [1910] (1969: 15; original version German).
[78] Lämmert (1989: 9; original version German).
[79] Ibid.
[80] Ibid.: 16.
[81] Ibid.

of narration initially shares with all linguistic communication, is that of *sequentiality*, the only manner in which it can be transmitted and received"[82]. The structural forms of the title are the forms that structure and shape the narrative text as it unfolds in time. On this basis, Lämmert is able to identify three typological classes, well aware that doing so brings him far beyond the "area of the novel," which is why he refers instead to "what is valid for the art of narration in general"[83].

In the introduction to *Die typischen Erzählsituationen* of 1955, Stanzel observes with dismay that the theory of the novel is characterized by "a considerably retarded level of development compared to our established knowledge about the lyric and the drama"[84]. In his "Rückblick auf Probleme der Erzähltheorie," Stanzel explains how problems of narrative theory first attracted his attention. His "initiation into a systematic and theoretically grounded literary theory" took place in 1950 during a discussion of Wellek and Warren's newly published *Theory of Literature*. To this stimulus was added the appearance of three essays which provoked him and demanded a response. They were "Zum Strukturproblem der epischen und dramatischen Dichtung" (1951), "Das epische Präteritum" (1953)—both by Käte Hamburger—and Wolfgang Kayser's "Die Anfänge des modernen Romans im 18. Jahrhundert und seine heutige Krise" (1954), which contains the dictum that the death of the narrator is the death of the novel[85]. *Die typischen Erzählsituationen im Roman* was a "first draft of a taxonomy which does not favour any one of the controversial forms in particular" and was written "to repulse all prescriptive attempts to reduce the novel to a single particular form of narration"[86]. The key starting point from which Stanzel derives his typology is the "fact that indirectness is a property of representation"[87]. Stanzel sees his typology as one of several possible ones which complement one another:

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82 Ibid.: 19.
83 Ibid.: 15.
84 Stanzel (1955: 3) (original version German).
85 Cf. Stanzel (1992: 425); now also above all Stanzel (2002). Neither Käte Hamburger's role nor Stanzel's dispute with her can be considered here.
86 Stanzel (1992: 426) (original version German).
87 Stanzel (1955: 4) (original version German).

> These three typologies complement one other in a highly convenient way. But even so, they cover only a partial section of the genre map of the novel; it can be no surprise, therefore, if numerous other typological approaches exist alongside them[88].

With these words, however, Stanzel dashes any hope of bringing the diverse forms of the novel together in a single typology. Yet he was able, using *Die typischen Formen des Romans* (1964) as a bridge, to turn the approach begun in *Die typischen Erzählsituationen im Roman* (1955) into a theory of narration in *Theorie des Erzählens* (1979), and so his work has remained relevant to narratological discussion and theoretical activity to the present day. Stanzel himself seems somewhat surprised by this, but he has an explanation at the ready nonetheless. From our perspective, it can also be seen as a description of the road which led, not just after 1955, from reflection on the theory of the novel to narratology:

> Precisely this diffusion of reactions to *Die typischen Erzählsituationen* illustrates how recent decades have seen something that was basically a matter for the theory of the novel in 1955 begin to spread far beyond the boundaries of literary theory. The state of modern research is correspondingly marked by the openendedness of the questions it considers: almost all individual questions of narrative theory present themselves in the context of their relationship to wider questions concerning the intellectual condition of our culture[89].

## 2.

Although the theoretical programmes of Eberhard Lämmert and Franz Stanzel were published as early as 1955, their ideas on narrative theory did not exert widespread influence on critical practice until the late 1960s and early 1970s. Lämmert's 1955 *Bauformen des Erzählens* was reprinted in four paperback editions between 1967 and 1972 (a partial reprint in 1978 triggered a new wave of interest); the book was already in its eighth edition by 1983[90]. Stanzel's 1955 habilitation thesis, *Die typischen Erzählsituationen im Roman*, was reprinted (not always in complete form)

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[88] Stanzel (1981: 69f.) (original version German).
[89] Stanzel (1995: 13) (original version German).
[90] Eberhard Lämmert, *Bauformen des Erzählens* (1955) (1st edn. 1955; 2d, revised edn. 1967; 3d, unchanged edn. 1968; 4th edn. 1970; 5th edn. 1972; partial reprint 1978; 7th, unchanged edn. 1980; 8th edn. 1983, 1989, 1991, 1993).

four times without alteration between 1963 and 1969[91]. It was followed in 1964 by the *Typische Formen des Romans*, which had reached its eighth edition by 1976[92]. The *Theorie des Erzählens*, the German version of which was published in paperback form as early as the first edition (sixth edition 1995)[93], also attracted international attention, being translated into English (1984), Czech (1988), Japanese (1988; third edition 1989), and other languages.[94]

As a result of the work of Lämmert, Stanzel, and others, the influence of structural analysis on the study of the novel increased. This was matched by an apparently conflicting increase in the attention given to the

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[91] Franz K. Stanzel *Die typischen Erzählsituationen im Roman: Dargestellt an "Tom Jones," "Moby Dick," "The Ambassadors," "Ulysses" u.a*, Vienna and Stuttgart 1955 (1st edn. 1955; unchanged reprint 1963; partial reprint in *Zur Poetik des Romans*, ed. Volker Klotz 1965[1], 1969[2], 303–38; unchanged reprint 1969; partial reprint in *James Joyces "Ulysses": Neuere deutsche Aufsätze*, ed. T. Fischer-Seidel, Frankfurt am Main 1977: 255–83). Translation: *Narrative Situations in the Novel: "Tom Jones," "Moby Dick," "The Ambassadors," "Ulysses,"* trans. J. P. Pusack (Bloomington and London 1971) (English translation of the 1955 German edn.).

[92] Franz K. Stanzel, *Typische Formen des Romans* (Göttingen 1964) (1st edn. 1964; 2d, revised edn. 1965; 3d edn. 1967; 4th edn. 1969; 5th edn. 1970; 6th edn. 1972; 7th edn. 1974; 8th edn. 1976; 9th edn. 1979; 10th, revised edn. 1981; 11th edn. 1987; 12th edn. 1993). Translation: *Tipicne forme romana*, foreword by Drinka Gojkovic, Novi Sad 1987 (Serbo-Croation translation).

[93] Franz K. Stanzel, *Theorie des Erzählens* (paperback edn.) Göttingen 1979 (1st edn. 1979; 2d, updated edn. 1982; 3d, revised edn. 1985; 4th, revised edn. 1989; 5th edn. 1991; 6th, unchanged edn. 1995). Translations: *A Theory of Narrative*, introduction by Paul Hernadi, Cambridge 1984 (English translation of 1982 German edn.); *Teorie vyprávení*, afterword by Milos Phorsky, Prague 1988 (Czech translation); *A Theory of Narrative*, preface by Paul Hernadi, 4th edn., Cambridge: Paperback Library, 1988 (English translation of 1982 German edn.); *Monogatari Kozi*, Tokyo 1988 (Japanese translation); *Monogatari Kozi*, 3d edn., Tokyo 1989 (Japanese translation).

[94] Anja Cornils considered these developments and Stanzel's own self-assessment in more detail in her lecture "Franz K. Stanzel in Werkentwicklung und Selbst-reflexion—ein paradigmatischer Fall für die Verschiebung der Romantheorie hin zur Narratologie?" (Workshop on the "Theorie und Praxis interkulturellen Erzählens," 20–23 September 2002). In the same context, Wilhelm Schernus's lecture examined various proposals for modifying Stanzel's typology, especially the typological circle. Both lectures are currently being prepared for publication. In the first part of his recently published *Unterwegs: Erzähltheorie für den Leser. Ausgewählte Schriften mit einer bio-bibliographischen Einleitung und einem Appendix von Dorrit Cohn* (Stanzel [2002]), Stanzel outlines his views on selected debates in narrative theory since the 1950s. A number of his essays are reprinted in the second part of the book.

historical evidence for the poetics of the novel. In a remarkably short space of time, a swathe of publications appeared, in which a substantial body of historical material was uncovered and made accessible to the scholarly community[95]. Among the many editors and authors involved, we can name Eberhard Lämmert, Reinhold Grimm, Bruno Hillebrand, Wilhelm Voßkamp, Ernst Weber, Hartmut Steinecke, Fritz Wahrenburg, Franz Rhöse, and Hanns-Josef Ortheil. One possible explanation for this surprising coincidence is that both the theory of the novel and narrative theory needed to find historical justification for their research methods and, because of their systematic programmes, had an inherent interest in collecting data against which to test the validity of their findings.

At the beginning of the 1970s, students of the theory of the novel such as Bruno Hillebrand[96] and Jürgen Schramke identified a clear division in the theory of the novel which separated the "theoretical approaches of the

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[95] Friedrich von Blanckenburg, *Versuch über den Roman: Faksimiledruck der Originalausgabe von 1774*, afterword by Eberhard Lämmert, Stuttgart 1965. *Deutsche Romantheorien: Beiträge zu einer historischen Poetik des Romans in Deutschland*, ed. with an introduction by Reinhold Grimm, Frankfurt am Main and Bonn 1968 (2d, updated edn. 1974). *Romantheorie: Dokumentation ihrer Geschichte in Deutschland: Bd. I: 1620–1880*, eds. Eberhard Lämmert, et al., Gütersloh, Cologne, and Berlin 1971. Bruno Hillebrand, *Theorie des Romans: Bd. I: Von Heliodor bis Jean Paul*, Munich 1972 (2d, revised and enlarged edn. 1980; 3d, enlarged edn. 1993). Wilhelm Voßkamp, *Romantheorie in Deutschland: Von Martin Opitz bis Friedrich von Blanckenburg*, Stuttgart 1973. *Texte zur Romantheorie: Bd I: 1626–1731*, notes, afterword, and bibliography by Ernst Weber, Munich 1974. *Romantheorie: Dokumentation ihrer Geschichte in Deutschland: Bd. II: seit 1880*, eds. Eberhard Lämmert, et al., Gütersloh, Cologne, and Berlin 1975. Hartmut Steinecke, *Romantheorie und Romankritik in Deutschland: Band I*, Stuttgart 1975. Hartmut Steinecke, *Romantheorie und Romankritik in Deutschland: Band II*, Stuttgart 1976. Fritz Wahrenburg, *Funktionswandel des Romans und ästhetische Norm: Die Entwicklung seiner Theorie in Deutschland bis zur Mitte des 18. Jahrhunderts*. Stuttgart 1976. Franz Rhöse, *Konflikt und Versöhnung: Untersuchungen zur Theorie des Romans von Hegel bis zum Naturalismus*, Stuttgart 1978. Hans-Josef Ortheil, *Der poetische Widerstand im Roman: Geschichte und Auslegung des Romans im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert*, Königstein (Czech Republic) 1980. *Texte zur Romantheorie: Band II: 1732–1780*, notes, afterword, and bibliography by Ernst Weber, Munich 1981 (vol. 1, 1974). *Romanpoetik in Deutschland: Von Hegel bis Fontane*, ed. Hartmut Steinecke, Tübingen 1984. Hartmut Steinecke, *Romanpoetik von Goethe bis Thomas Mann: Entwicklungen und Probleme der 'demokratischen Kunstform' in Deutschland*, Munich 1987.

[96] Bruno Hillebrand, *Theorie des Romans: Band I: Von Heliodor bis Jean Paul*, Munich 1972 (2d, revised and enlarged edn. Munich 1980; 3d, enlarged edn. 1993).

novelists" (as found in self-reflection and theorizing inside and outside the novel itself) from the "more recent critical theory of the novel" (which referred to structuralist, typological, and morphological studies)[97]. At the same time, the systematic approaches were criticized for failing to recognize the diversity of the historical material at their disposal. In the *Theorie des modernen Romans*, Schramke writes:

> It has already been suggested that the novelist's theoretical interest is directed at themes which are fundamentally different from the standard problems of modern critical theory of the novel. The latter examines structural forms, forms of presentation, stages of narration, narrative positions, point of view, and so on—that is to say, it examines the technical means of representation and the different forms in which they can be found in any work from any period. The aim of all such modes of study, be they structurally, typologically (Muir, Kayser, Stanzel), or morphologically (G. Müller, Lämmert) orientated, is to provide a systematic enumeration of timeless representational possibilities. […] As a result, theory becomes accordingly ahistorical[98].

The tense relationship between the historical poetics of the novel and the newly established discipline of narrative theory was acknowledged and thematized in narrative theory itself, as shown by texts such as Lämmert's "Zum Wandel der Geschichtserfahrung im Reflex der Romantheorie" in *Geschichte – Ereignis und Erzählung*[99]. The essays in the book clearly show that, in addition to considering the relationship between what are now described as "narrative studies and history," critics were also discussing the extension of narrative theory to factual literature at the time in question.

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97 Hillebrand's obvious criticism of systematic theories of the novel did not prevent him from publishing such ideas in a 1978 collection with the revealing title *Zur Struktur des Romans*, ed. Bruno Hillebrand, Darmstadt 1978 (*On the Structure of the Novel*; original version German).

98 Schramke (1974: 15ff.) (original version German).

99 "*Geschichte – Ereignis und Erzählung*," eds. Reinhart Koselleck and Wolf-Dieter Stempel, Poetik und Hermeneutik 5, Munich 1973 (unchanged reprint 1983; 2d reprint of 1st edn. 1990). Among the essays included in the book are: Wolf-Dieter Stempel, "Erzählung, Beschreibung und der historische Diskurs" (325–46); Karl-heinz Stierle, "Geschichte als Exemplum—Exemplum als Geschichte: Zur Pragmatik und Poetik narrativer Texte" (347–75); Eberhard Lämmert, "Zum Wandel der Geschichtserfahrung im Reflex der Romantheorie" (503–15); "Narrativität und Geschichte," Beiträge von Karlheinz Stierle, Hans Robert Jauss, Peter Szondi, et al. (519–89).

After about 1970, increasing competition developed between the various lines of research directed primarily at the novel[100]. This meant that it became more and more difficult to gather together the diverging approaches to research on the novel under a single name. Awareness of the problems connected with the diverging methods led to deeper reflection on the term 'theory of the novel' in the critical literature. Fritz Wahrenburg summarized the situation when he wrote in 1976 that, "at the synchronic level, at best only a framing function whose internal coherence is no more than an illusion"[101] could be attributed to the term 'theory of the novel'[102]. The theory of the novel was divided into genre theory, the historical poetics of the novel, and narrative theory.

[100] As well as approaches based on communication theory (Anderegg, Ihwe, Iser), we find semiological (Eco), structuralist (Barthes, Greimas), sociological (Goldmann), and other approaches.

[101] Wahrenburg (1976: 1) (original version German).

[102] Against this background, it is no surprise to find Steinecke (1984: 13f.) arguing that the confusing terminology should be clarified by subsuming the equally important terms 'theory of the novel' and 'criticism of the novel' under the term 'poetics of the novel' (original version German).

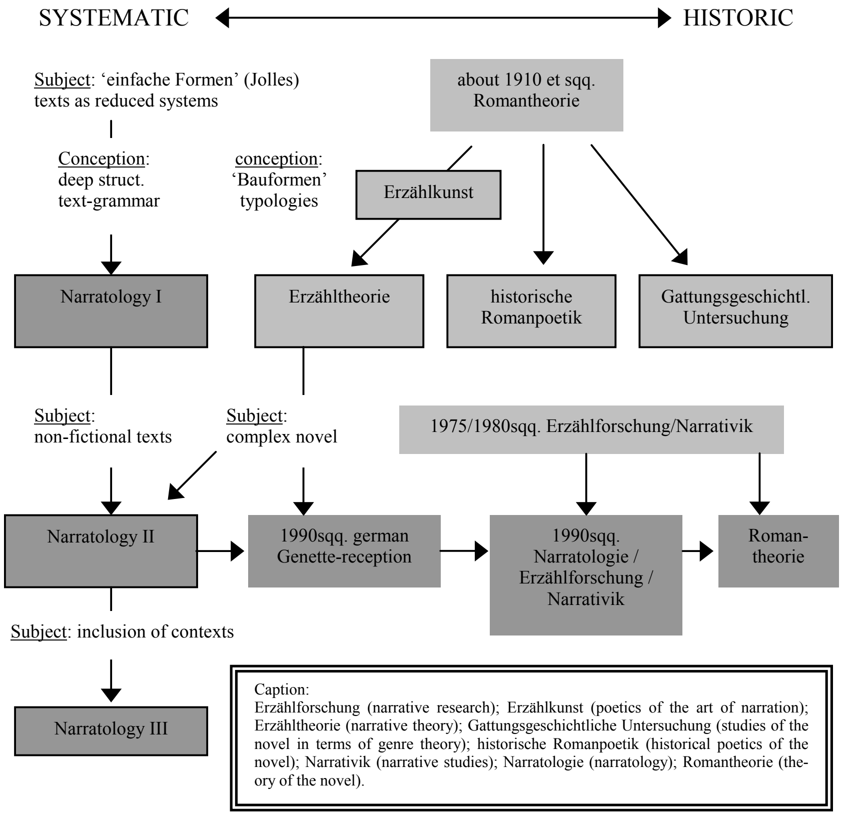



Fig. 1: The relationship between the theory of the novel, narrative theory, and narratology

At the end of the 1970s, the terms 'narrative research'[103] and 'narrative studies' were employed in an attempt to reconcile the systematizing theoretical paradigm with the historically orientated one. As a diffuse umbrella term, 'narrative research' covered the many different areas in which discussion was taking place—for example, morphological and typological narrative theory, the historical poetics of the novel, studies of the novel in

[103] This term had already been used by Lockemann in his critical survey "Zur Lage der 'Erzählforschung,'" cf. Lockemann (1965).

terms of genre theory, and work involving formalism, structuralism, and modern narratology[104].

The proceedings of the 1980 “Erzählforschung” symposium, published in 1982 with Eberhard Lämmert as editor, document a lively exchange of ideas between linguistics and literary theory and also reflect the potential this has to allow all narrative texts, not just fictional literature, to be classified systematically. However, the symposium also considered issues in the theory of the novel that belong in the transition zone between narrative theory and genre history. The involvement of disciplines other than literary theory and linguistics (e.g. the science of history) is further evidence of the expanding horizons of studies in narrative theory.

The years prior to the symposium had seen the publication of a three-part collection of essays selected by Wolfgang Haubrichs under the title *Erzählforschung 1–3*, which appeared as supplements to *LiLi: Zeitschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Linguistik* between 1976 and 1978[105]. Haubrichs almost always used the term ‘narrative studies’ when discussing contributions to narrative research[106]. ‘Narrative studies’ was so ambivalent that it could cover both practical employment of and theoretical reflection on narration in both fictional and factual contexts. By choosing this term, Haubrichs may also have intended to indicate the existence, parallel to the development of international narratology, of a distinct tradition of German narrative theory and extend its life under the name ‘narrative studies’[107].

Bibliographies and reference works of Germanic studies have been slow to reflect research developments by covering terms such as ‘narrative theory,’ ‘narrative research,’ ‘narrative studies,’ and ‘narratology.’ This shows that our thematic complex had to wait for some time before it

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[104] From its inception, the term ‘narrative research’ was interpreted as having a wider meaning than ‘narratology.’

[105] The collection also includes a partial reprint of Lämmert’s *Bauformen des Er-zählens*.

[106] Gero von Wilpert treats the terms ‘narrative research’ and ‘narrative studies’ as equivalent in his *Sachwörterbuch der Literatur*, 7th, annotated edn., Stuttgart 1989.

[107] In Walter Killy’s *Literatur-Lexikon*, Gütersloh and Munich 1992, narrative theory and narrative studies are treated together and understood as a theory of the art of narration. The structuralist theories of narrative in France and the approaches of formalism in Russia are both treated as belonging to narrative studies. Narrative studies as found in the German-speaking areas is set apart by its traditional connections.

was accepted as an autonomous field of study by the scholarly community.

The first entry bearing the heading 'narrative studies, narratology' to appear in a handbook, dictionary, or lexicon of Germanic studies can be found in the seventh edition (1989) of Gero von Wilpert's *Sachwörterbuch der Literatur*[108]. Von Wilpert's definition reveals the extent of the terminological confusion that (still) affected codified texts[109] at the time:

> Narrative Studies, Narratology: […] new terms for modern general narrative research and linguistic/semiotic analysis of narrative texts as the study of the genre poetics of the epic in general, narrative theory, and typical narrative situations in the communication process[110].

To assist the reader in interpreting this remarkably dense definition, figure 2 provides an overview of the typical use of the terms 'narrative theory,' 'narrative research,' 'narrative studies,' and 'narratology' in reference works of Germanic studies (handbooks and dictionaries or lexicons) from 1955 to 2001.

In 1974, in the *Handlexikon zur Literaturwissenschaft*, Diether Krywalski used the term 'narrative theory' for the first time[111]. Rather than receiving an entry of its own, however, it was treated in part of the entry on 'epic.' Neither structuralist approaches nor formalism are mentioned in this context, which is remarkable given that by the late 1960s and early 1970s, key works of French structuralism had already been translated into German and found an audience in the German-speaking countries[112]. Re-

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[108] Gero von Wilpert, *Sachwörterbuch der Literatur*. 7th, revised and enlarged edn., Stuttgart 1989 (1st edn. 1955).

[109] For the purposes of the present study, codified texts include those works which reproduce established, undisputed knowledge about a subject for the purposes of scholarly reference.

[110] Gero von Wilpert, *Sachwörterbuch der Literatur*. 7th, revised and enlarged edn., Stuttgart 1989 (1st edn. 1955) (original version German).The attempted codification in this entry in the *Sachwörterbuch* reflects the general state of the theoretical debate in the mid-1970s.

[111] Diether Krywalski, *Handlexikon zur Literaturwissenschaft*, Munich 1974.

[112] Roland Barthes, *Am Nullpunkt der Literatur*, trans. Helmut Scheffel, Hamburg 1959 (original French edn. 1953). Roland Barthes, *Mythen des Alltags*, trans. Helmut Scheffel, Frankfurt am Main 1964 (original French edn. 1957). Roland Barthes, *Kritik und Wahrheit*, trans. Helmut Scheffel, Frankfurt am Main 1967 (original French edn. 1966). Michail Bachtin, "Epos und Roman: Zur Methodologie der Romanforschung," in M.B., *Formen der Zeit im Roman. Untersuchungen zur historischen Poetik*, Frank-

ferring to Staiger, Petsch, Kayser, Müller, Lämmert, and Hamburger, Krywalski presents narrative theory as a mainly German tradition and thus one that is, for the most part, sealed off from international developments[113].

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furt/M. 1989, 210–51. Roland Barthes, *Literatur oder Geschichte*, trans. Helmut Scheffel, Frankfurt am Main. 1969 (selected texts from 1963). Michail Bachtin, "Epos und Roman," in *Kunst und Literatur* 18 (1970): 918–42. Algirdas Julien Greimas, *Strukturale Semantik*, authorized trans. from the French by Jens Ihwe, Braunschweig 1971 (original edn. 1966). Claude Bremond, "Die Erzählnachricht," in *Literaturwissenschaft und Linguistik* 3, edited by Jens Ihwe, Frankfurt a.M. 1972, 177–217 (first published in *Communications* 4 [1964]: 4–32). Algirdas Julien Greimas, "Die Struktur des Erzählaktanten: Versuch eines generativen Ansatzes," in *Literaturwissenschaft und Linguistik* 3, edited by Jens Ihwe, Frankfurt a.M. 1972, 218–38 (first published in 1967 in *Linguistic studies presented to André Martinet*). Algirdas Julien Greimas, "Zur Interpretationstheorie der mythischen Erzählung," in *Strukturalismus als interpretatives Verfahren*, ed. Helga Gallas, Darmstadt and Neuwied 1972, 105–62. Tzvetan Todorov: "Die Grammatik der Erzählung," in *Strukturalismus als interpretatives Verfahren*, ed. Helga Gallas, Darmstadt and Neuwied 1972, 57–71. Tzvetan Todorov, "Die Kategorien der literarischen Erzählung," in *Strukturalismus in der Literaturwissenschaft*, ed. Heinz Blumensath, Köln 1972, 263–94 (first published in French in *Communications* 8 [1966]: 125–51). Tzvetan Todorov, "Die strukturelle Analyse der Erzählung," in Ihwe, Jens (Hg.): *Literaturwissenschaft und Linguistik* 3, Frankfurt a.M. 1972, 265–75. Tzvetan Todorov, *Einführung in die fantastische Literatur*, Munich 1972. Tzvetan Todorov, *Poetik in der Prosa*, Frankfurt am Main 1972 (the original French edition [*Poétique de la prose*, Paris 1971] was reviewed by Vittorio Marmo, *Lingua e stile* 7 [1972]: 561–73). *Antworten der Strukturalisten: Roland Barthes, Michael Foucault, Francois Jacob, Roman Jakobson, Claude Levi-Strauss*, ed. Adelbert Reif, trans. from the French by Britta Reif-Willenthal and Friedrich Griese, Hamburg 1973. Tzvetan Todorov, "Poetik," in *Einführung in den Strukturalismus*, ed. François Wahl. Frankfurt am Main 1973, 105–79. Roland Barthes, *Die Lust am Text*, trans. Traugott König, Frankfurt am Main 1974.

113 T. S. Eliot is the only representative of international narrative theory mentioned by Krywalski.

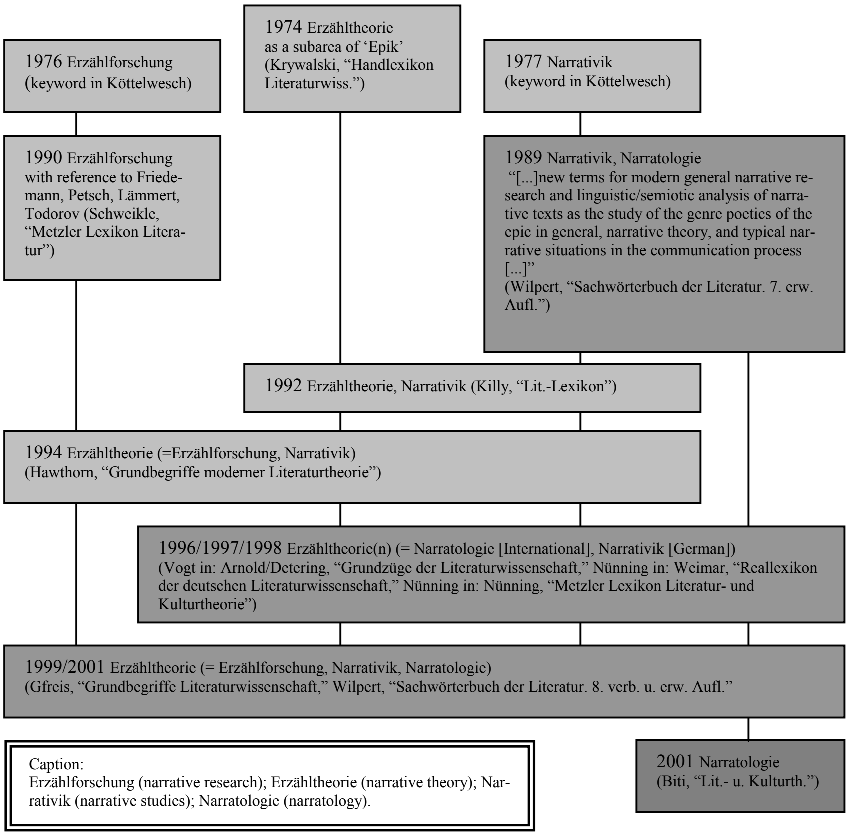



Fig. 2: The terminology used in reference works of Germanic studies
(handbooks, dictionaries, and lexicons)

The list of keywords in Köttelwesch's *Bibliographie der deutschen Literaturwissenschaft* does not contain a single entry on 'narrative theory' or 'narratology' for the period 1954 to 1980[114]. On the other hand, there are three entries each for 'narrative research' (1976, 1979, 1980) and 'narrative studies' (1977, 1978, 1979) during the same period[115].

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[114] *Bibliographie der deutschen Literaturwissenschaft*, ed. Hanns W. Eppelsheimer, revised by Clemens Köttelwesch. Our summary is based on the editions for 1954–80.

[115] The 1977 entry for 'narrative studies' is accompanied by the note 'see narration' (original version German).

Only with the advent of the 1990s do handbooks begin including theories of formalism and structuralism in entries on narrative theory[116]. The term 'narrative studies'—as a specific position in the German-speaking countries—continued to be of key importance in the context of studies in narrative theory until the beginning of the 1990s; even as late as 1996, it appears in the subtitle of a festschrift for Franz Stanzel[117]. While recognizing the existence of the methods of international narratology, German-speaking theorists kept their distance from them, preferring to stick to their own morphological and typological tradition. Only after 1990 did the standard works of Lämmert and Stanzel begin to lose their significance as (international) narratology[118] came to be included in reference works of Germanic studies[119]. As a result, the definition of terms such as 'narrative theory,' 'narrative research,' 'narrative studies,' and 'narratology' became more precise.

Narrative theory (in the sense of narratology/narrative studies) was clearly distinguished from the theory of the novel. The terms 'narratology'—understood as the international form of narrative theory—and 'narrative studies'—as the national form of narrative theory in the German-speaking countries—were finally drawn into the definition of narrative theory in 1997[120]. Subsequent articles have taken up Nünning's definition[121], thus establishing a standard concept of narratology to the ex-

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[116] Walter Killy, *Literatur-Lexikon*, Gütersloh and Munich 1992 ('narrative theory, narrative studies'); Ulfert Ricklefs, *Fischer Lexikon Literatur*, Frankfurt am Main 1996 ('narration', which includes a section on narrative theory); Horst Brunner and M. Rainer, *Literaturwissenschaftliches Lexikon*, Berlin 1997 ('narrative theory').

[117] *Tales and "their Telling Difference": Zur Theorie und Geschichte der Narrativik. Festschrift zum 70. Geburtstag von Franz K. Stanzel*, eds. Herbert Foltinek, Wolfgang Riehle, and Waldemar Zacharasiewicz, Heidelberg 1993.

[118] Narratology first merits an entry of its own in Vladimir Biti, *Literatur- und Kulturtheorie: Ein Handbuch gegenwärtiger Begriffe*, Reinbek 2001. Here, however, we are dealing with a translation; the original article, 'Narratologija,' appeared in 1997 in *Pojmovnik suvremene knjizevne i kulturne teorije*, Zagreb 1997, 237–39.

[119] See Bogdal 2002 on the concept of standard works (and on Lämmert's structural forms).

[120] See Nünning (1997), (1998).

[121] 'Erzähltheorie' (= narratology, narrative research, narrative studies) in Heike Gfrereis, *Grundbegriffe der Literaturwissenschaft*, Stuttgart 1999. 'Erzähltheorie' (= narrative research, narrative studies, narratology) in Gero von Wilpert, *Sachwörterbuch der Literatur*, 8th, revised and enlarged edn., Stuttgart 2001 (the first edition of the *Sachwörterbuch* to include an entry on narrative theory).

tent that international developments in narrative theory (i.e. narratology) are now comprehensively included in the discussion for the first time.

International narratology ('Narratology II' in figure 1) only seems to have gained increased significance in the German-speaking countries when Genette's *Die Erzählung* began to be studied in detail[122]. The lasting adoption and application of Genette's analysis of narrative texts laid the foundations for the links which were subsequently established between German narrative theory and international narratological discussions—since the beginning of the 1990s, contextual knowledge has been increasingly used in the development of narratological theories, and it can be seen that narratology is undergoing an interdisciplinary expansion (as represented by the box 'Narratology III' in figure 1). In contrast to narrative theory, narratology prior to Genette ('Narratology I') takes the analysis of relatively simple narrative forms as its starting point (e.g. Propp's analysis of the fairytale and Greimas's *actant* model) and aims to analyse them according to the rule-based system of a grammar[123].

Genette's narratological model derives from a combination of two different analytical methods. On the one hand, he arranges the problems of analysing narrative discourse into categories which are "borrowed from the grammar of verbs"[124], based on the assumption that every narrative can be seen as the extension of a verb in the grammatical sense[125]. On the other hand, he arrives at his analytical categories by means of intensive engagement with the text of a complex novel:

> Like any work or any organism, the investigation consists of universal, or at least trans-individual, elements, which it synthesizes into a characteristically combined sin-

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[122] Gérard Genette, *Die Erzählung* 1994 (French original edns. 1972 and 1983).

[123] According to Stanzel, there is a fundamental difference between narratology and narrative theory that can still be seen today: "Narratology's primary function is to further the pursuit of elitist theoretical knowledge, which is indeed a necessary part of literary criticism. Narrative theory, on the other hand, is not intended to be more than an auxiliary resource which helps us engage intelligently with the literature we read. In order to perform this function, however, it is constantly forced to update its conceptual apparatus to reflect the most recent findings of narratology" (Stanzel [2002: 52]; original version German).

[124] Genette (1994: 19).

[125] Ibid.: 18.

gular whole. Thus, analysing them does not mean moving from the general to the particular, but rather the reverse—moving from the particular to the general[126].

Thus, Genette's narratology in the sense of a low structuralism[127] makes it possible for the classical formalist and structuralist analysis of narrative texts to be combined with the more complex treatments of the theory of the novel. The product is a flexible pragmatism with relatively sophisticated theoretical foundations.

To conclude, we shall discuss three examples of recent publications which should illustrate just how difficult it still seems to be to distinguish between the concepts of narratology, narrative theory, and the theory of the novel, at least as far as introductory texts and codified accounts are concerned.

In their *Einführung in die Erzähltheorie*, Matías Martínez and Michael Scheffel give equal consideration to narrative theory (based on Stanzel and Lämmert), Genette's analytical categories, and contemporary issues in international narratology. Casting an eye to the future (in the *Ausblick* chapter of part 3), they even extend their horizons beyond the current state of narratological research by indicating possible action models which narrative theory could borrow from outside the context of literary theory. The theory of the novel, on the other hand, is not a significant theme of the book beyond the introductory comments on the characteristics of fictional narration.

In contrast, Jochen Vogt chose to add a "far too brief introduction to the history of the novel"[128] to the eighth edition (1998) of his introduction to narrative theory and the theory of the novel, *Aspekte erzählender Prosa: Eine Einführung in Erzähltechnik und Romantheorie*[129]. The motivation for this addition was, he writes, "a tangible shortcoming in the first

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126 Ibid.: 12 (original version German).

127 Scholes (1974). In Stanzel (2002), Stanzel includes Genette, as well as Cohn and himself, among the low structuralists.

128 Vogt (1998: 11).

129 The book deals with concepts of narrative theory and narratology. It also considers various lines of narrative research, starting with Hamburger, Lämmert, and Stanzel (German-language narrative research to the beginning of the 1970s), moving on to Anderegg and Kahrmann (narrative research using communication theory), and concluding with Propp, Barthes, Chatman, and others (an international trend which analyses narrative texts in terms of formalism/structuralism or semiology).

edition [1972]"[130], in which aspects of narrative theory were equated with aspects of the theory of the novel and insufficient attention was given to historical perspectives. In his foreword, he gives an additional reason for including a "historical outline of thought on the theory of the novel" in the new edition: "The novel, as is now becoming clearer, or indeed as should be stated clearly here, is the dominant modern literary genre and therefore a fundamental point of reference for this introduction to narrative theory"[131]. Vogt's eighth edition thereby indicates indirectly that narrative theory is no longer equated with the theory of the novel or even capable of being subsumed by it. It is also notable that the use of the term "theory of the novel" as a central aspect of narrative theory suggests that the theory of the novel could constitute its own autonomous field inside narrative theory/narratology.

Finally, the concept of the theory of the novel is radically revived by Matthias Bauer. In a somewhat anachronistic manner, he puts forward an attempt to resurrect the term in his book *Romantheorie* (1997), where he proposes using it as an umbrella term for the historical poetics of the novel, narrative theory, and narratology (the latter two being grouped together as narrative research). Formalist, dialogic, morphological, phenomenological, and semiotic theories are all treated as elements of narrative research, which is itself presented as an integral part of the theory of the novel[132]. Against the background of this framework, Bauer also describes, as a logical consequence of the system he develops, his view of what the theory of the novel really means to narratologists. It is "a methodology of reading […] that is based, on the one hand, on Immanuel Kant's (1724–1804) structural model of knowledge, and, on the other, on the modern linguistics of Ferdinand de Saussure (1857–1913)"[133]. The theory of the novel, disowned by critical discourse in favour of narrative theory, narrative research, narrative studies, and narratology, here finds a foster father who returns it to its rightful place in the critical debate around 1970.

130 Vogt (1998: 11) (original version German).
131 Ibid.
132 The organization of Bauer's book suggests that there was a continual line of development leading from the historical poetics of the novel to narrative research. In reality, this was never the case; as we have shown, these critical movements were competing with one another when they took shape.
133 Bauer (1997: 4) (original version German).

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# The Systematic Place of Narratology in Literary Theory and Textual Theory[*]

## 0. The Problem

What critics in the German-speaking countries call 'narrative theory' is really a very diverse set of theories. In terms of their explicitly stated intentions, at least, they differ radically from one another in many ways. Predictably, for a start—and it is regrettable that the human sciences treat this as trivial[1]—the theories differ in the theoretical standards and methodological paradigms to which they subscribe[2]. That is not my concern here. However, the theories also differ with respect to two points which are relevant to the subject of this essay.

1. The theories apply to completely different areas. That is to say, they differ in the extension of the corpus of actually existent or potentially conceivable statements to which they claim to apply. Some of them present themselves as theories of genre—theories of the fairytale, of the novel, of narrative literature in all its forms[3]—others as theories that cross genres and even media[4].

[*] For Manfred Pfister on his sixtieth birthday.
[1] It is high time that the Dilthean term 'Geisteswissenschaften' ('humanities') be abandoned because of its ideological implications.
[2] On this, see Titzmann (2003: 3.2.).
[3] All prestructuralist narrative theories, for example, are basically members of this category.
[4] The structuralist narrative theories are basically part of this group.

2. Even when such theories apply to one and the same text class, they differ in the levels of the text—the substructures of the text—that they attempt to describe.

## 1. The Problem: The Place of Narrative Theory as Part of a Textual Theory in Literary Theory

To a certain extent, the fact that all these theories are grouped together under the term 'narrative theory' can only be explained historically, that is, in terms of the research climate that produced them. At first, each was developed on the basis of—or could at least be applied to—a textual corpus which was classified as 'narrative' in the traditional sense of the word. So, however varied the theoretical subject matter of these theories was, they were always meant to cover at least part of the set of narrative texts. This was the case irrespective of whether particular genres (the theory of the novel, of the fairytale, etc.) or particular substructures (the structures of narration or what is narrated) were involved. Any particular theory could bind together subtheories with a variety of scopes; this could happen, for example, if part of a theory described phenomena that only exist in narrative texts and other parts described phenomena that are also present in non-narrative texts or in narrative statements of non-literary or non-linguistic origin[5]. For the purposes of our investigation, we need to divide the theories that we are used to treating as a group called 'narrative theory' into subtheories on the basis of the scope to which they apply, whether that be considered in relation to the corpora of semiotic statements they cover or in relation to the textual levels they describe. The reason for this is that it is our aim to identify the place that these subtheories have in the system of literary theory in general or, in a more specific sense, in a theory of text or literature developed by it.

## 2. A Note on the Concept of Textual Theory

Our first task, then, is to explain what we should understand by 'theory of literature' and 'textual theory.' After the early efforts of (Russian) formal-

5 Examples, both of which portray themselves as genre theories, are Lämmert's structural approach to time and space in Lämmert (1955) and the treatment of phenomena of perspective and focalization in Stanzel (1964).

ism, there can be no doubt that it was (European) structuralism that placed a new kind of conceptual undertaking on the agenda of literary theory. That undertaking was to construct a poetics that, in contrast to the familiar poetics of the Aristotelian tradition, was not normative but descriptive; a poetics, then, that was able to distinguish and categorize different ways in which texts can be constructed without engaging in subjective speculation about what classes of text are superior to others.

What is the nature of this hypothetical textual theory? It is marked out by the breadth of the material on which it is based. Not only does it take as its starting point those kinds of text that have already—almost, as it were, by chance—appeared in the historical record (i.e. the set of texts that exist at the time the theory is developed); it also covers the kinds that, although not (as yet) manifested in reality, are nonetheless logically possible. Such a theory is distinguished by the fact that it is not an incomplete theory of the texts that have historically appeared in reality but a systematic and exhaustive theory of all possible texts, one that could also be drawn on to describe innovative, future texts. Such a textual theory systematizes the logical alternatives which the text can choose between; it conceives of the text as the product of a set of successive choices between these alternatives, as an ordered set of hierarchically arranged processes of selection from paradigmatic lists of alternatives. Of course, processes of text production never take place as a series of logically ordered decisions in this way. But the text itself can still be reconstructed by textual theory as a process of this kind which reflects the order in which, consciously or unconsciously, the decision-making processes of an author may have taken place in reality.

We need not concern ourselves here with the extent to which this hypothetical programme can be made a reality. As far as the set of narrative theories is concerned, the subset of structuralist narrative theories, at least, has attempted to systematize its object domain in such a way. It is immediately obvious that the crucial logically complete and exhaustive set of alternatives is only ever defined according to the particular aspect of possible textual structures that is under consideration in each case. At best, then, such a theory can be complete only with respect to the questions that researchers are able to pose at the particular point in time at which it is formulated. This means that it can be extended by new questions at any time. This particular kind of incompleteness, of course, is not problematic in any way—it is normal in any scientific process, whatever the particular discipline involved. And for my argument, it is irrelevant what kind of

structure such a theoretical poetics might have, be it a taxonomical classification or conceived of as generative in the sense of Chomskyan linguistics.

It is more interesting to focus on a different point. No poetics, or, as I shall put it from now on, no textual theory, can be a theory of literary texts alone. The (structuralist) investigations into criteria of literariness in the 1960s and 1970s have shown that the meaning of 'literature' can only be defined pragmatically and historically: literature is that which the culture or age in question considers to be literature, provided that it makes and recognizes a distinction between literary and non-literary texts in the first place. In addition, we now know that literary speech can also include things that appear in non-literary texts; whether it does actually include them or not is simply a function of the cultural or historical contextual conditions of literary production at any given time. And in any case, any literary theory that takes itself seriously can never dispense with the study of non-literary texts. For a start, it needs them if it is to reconstruct the boundary between literature and non-literature in the culture or epoch with which it is concerned. It needs them if it is to reconstruct the cultural knowledge that is necessary to understand the texts of a particular era[6]. And it needs them if it is to set the literature of a period in its cultural context and reconstruct the cultural relevance and function of literature in that period.

Considering these arguments together, we can see that texts by necessity—but not literary texts alone—are the subject matter of literary theory, and that a literary theory of text must be a theory of all texts, literary and non-literary alike. In this particular respect, literary theory has a cross-disciplinary function in our cultural discourse system. Beyond the historical and systematic theoretical analysis of literature, it can also provide analytical criteria for all disciplines which involve 'texts' in the widest sense of the word—literary and non-literary, written and oral, linguistic and non-linguistic alike. It can, then, inform all the human sciences (e.g. the science of history), as well as art history, psychology, sociology, ethnology, philosophy, theology, and so on.

For example, narration does not just take place in literary, mythological, and religious texts; it is also an indispensable part of everyday communication, be it oral or written, literary or non-literary, linguistic or non-

[6] On the concept of cultural knowledge, see Titzmann (1977), (1993: chap. 3.2.).

linguistic. Narration occurs in a most diverse range of genres: in the novel, the story, the novella, the drama, the ballad and other lyric forms, the fairytale, the saga, the anecdote, and so on. Narration can be found in a most diverse range of semiotic systems and media: in cycles of paintings, comic strips, theatre, opera, film, and advertising. All these different forms of narration have in common the fact that they narrate a story; they all differ in how they narrate it, that is, in the forms which they use to present it. They differ in the means they have of representing the stories they narrate; this is most obviously illustrated when a given story is, say, transformed from one genre (epic, drama, lyric, novel) into another or converted from one medium (e.g. drama, novel) into another (e.g. a theatrical production or a film version). It is clear, then, that certain aspects of any narrative theory are generalizable and relevant not only across and beyond all literary texts but also across and beyond all narrative texts, across and beyond all linguistic statements in general. Let us summarize the two key points.

1. In narrative theory as we understand it here, it is in the first instance utterly irrelevant whether the texts involved are literary or non-literary, fictive or non-fictive. Theories of literariness and fictionality, important as they may be as such for literary theory, are completely irrelevant and of secondary importance to narratological theories and the distinctions they have to make. Decisions such as whether a text is classified as literary or non-literary and whether a story is fictive or non-fictive are of secondary significance and have nothing whatsoever to do with the basic structures of narrative.
2. Every theory of poetics (i.e. textual theory) is relevant to theories of interpretation and to interpretation in practice—all interpretation needs categories of theoretical analysis and description. A narratological theory is not a theory of interpretation; but the categories it provides can be relevant to a theory of interpretation[7].

[7] See Titzmann (2003).

## 3. The Basic Structural Requirements of a Textual Theory

Every textual theory, however it may be structured and whatever preferences in critical theory and methodology may underlie it, must fulfil two requirements (which can in fact be reduced to a single basic logical requirement).

1. A set of theoretical statements constitutes a discrete subtheory $STh_i$ of a textual theory *Th* if and only if it is logically independent of every other subtheory $STh_j$. $STh_i$ is logically independent of $STh_j$ if and only if none of the choices made by texts between the alternative possibilities distinguished in $STh_i$ simultaneously implies a choice between the alternatives set out in $STh_j$.

From this perspective, for example, a theory of the speech or narrative situations of texts and a theory of the rhetorical means employed in the language of texts (e.g. the theory of figures and tropes) are independent subtheories[8]. The choice of a particular speech or narrative situation does not simultaneously determine what figures and tropes the text will contain, or even whether it will contain figures and tropes at all. Conversely, choosing a particular rhetorical technique does not determine the speech or narrative situation that will be chosen. And the speech situation chosen by a text does not specify whether that text has a narrative structure, and if so what one, just as the choice of this or that narrative structure does not imply the use of a particular kind of speech situation.

2. In a subtheory *STh*, all the descriptive categories which it develops must be logically independent of one another. They are logically independent of one another when
    a. the alternatives ($x_1, x_2, \ldots$) in a given class of states of affairs *X* logically exclude one another—that is, they cannot simultaneously be true in the same text or the same segment of that text;
    b. none of the alternatives ($x_1, x_2, \ldots$) in any of the classes of states of affairs distinguished by *STh* ($X, Y, Z, \ldots$) logi-

[8] The concept behind the term ‘speech situation’ introduced here should not be confused with the communication situation in which a text is actually received; see section 5.1. below for more details.

cally implies or is logically implied by any of the alternatives in another category (e.g. $y_i$, $z_i$, ...).

Initially, this requirement means that the logical composition of the theory should have a binary structure. Under certain conditions, however, a third value can be added; this situation is not considered here. Inside a particular class of states of affairs, therefore, there should only ever be two, and only two, alternatives, each of which can itself include further alternatives, and so on recursively (this means that the theory can reconstruct states of affairs of any level of complexity). If, for example, the text has chosen to fill the role of a speaker figure—that is, if it introduces a speaker represented by first-person pronouns instead of not introducing one—the speaker can then either be part of the represented world (e.g. Stanzel's first-person narrative situation) or not (e.g. Stanzel's authorial narrative situation). A third alternative (that the question cannot be answered conclusively) might also be possible here.

The structure of the theory, then, takes the form of a classificatory matrix which specifies the possible decisions and combinations which the text can make:

| Category (class of states of affairs) | Set of alternative possibilities (subclasses) in a category (two or a maximum of three) | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| $X_{obl}$ | $x_1$ | $x_2$ | $x_3$ |
| $Y_{obl}$ | $y_1$ | $y_2$ | – |
| subordinate classes | | $y_2^{a}$, $y_2^{b}$ ($y_2^{b}$: $y_2^{b'}$, $y_2^{b''}$) | |
| $Z_{opt}$ | $z_1$ | $z_2$ | – |
| subordinate classes | $z_1^{a}$, $z_1^{b}$ | $z_2^{a}$, $z_2^{b}$ | |
| … | … | … | |

Schema 1

Obl(igatory): one of the alternatives must be selected.
Opt(ional): one of the alternatives can be selected (dependent on preceding selections; the same applies to the subordinate classes).

In a subtheory with the structure shown in schema 1, the rules outlined below apply:

1. The text can select no more than one of the alternatives listed in a given row (e.g. $x_1$ or $x_2$ or $x_3$).
2. Every alternative in every row can be combined with every alternative in every other row (e.g. $x_1 + y_1$, $x_1 + y_2$, $x_1 + z_1$, $x_1 + z_2$, etc.).
3. If the text selects an alternative which itself contains alternatives (e.g. $y_2$), then the text must also make a selection from the latter (in our example, $y_2^{a}$ or $y_2^{b}$). This itself means that
4. subordinate selections which are logically dependent on other selections do not constitute a category of their own but rather represent subcategorizations.

The structure of the theory becomes more complicated when, as is necessary, we introduce the distinction in (5) below.

5. Obligatory selections are those where the text must choose one of the alternatives from one of the categories. For example, the text must decide whether there should be a grammatically instantiated speaker 'I' or not. Such cases should be distinguished from optional selection, where the text can choose one of the alternatives in a category but does not have to do so. For example, only if a segment of the text has chosen to use rhetorical techniques does it have to choose between the different classes (metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, etc.) in the category of tropes.

In this sense, subordinate selections between subcategorizations are optional. A selection or category is optional if it depends on a preceding, superordinate selection—as shown in schema 2, for example:

Schema 2

1. $Z$ or not-$Z$?
2. $Z$.
3. If $Z$, then $z_1$ or $z_2$?
4. $z_1$.
5. If $z_1$, then $z_1^{a}$ or $z_1^{b}$?
6. $z_1^{a}$.

Each of selections (4) and (6) is subordinate and optional: they exist only as functions of preceding selections—only (2) makes possible the selection in (3); only (4) makes possible the selection in (5).

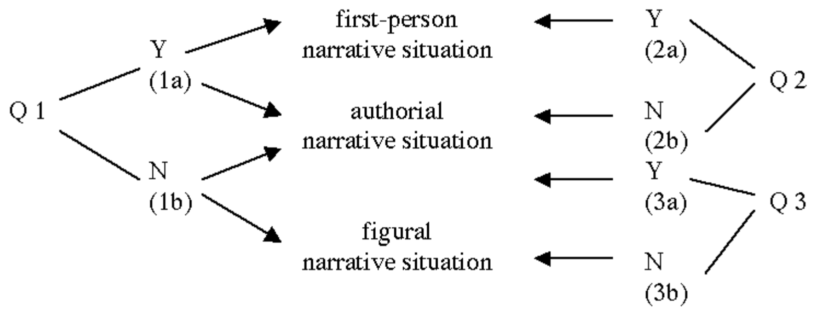
As the discussion so far may have seemed somewhat abstract, we shall now consider the narrative theory of Stanzel (1964) as an example. This theory, while it has produced considerable individual achievements, suffers from fundamental problems in its logical structure (many of which have been repaired[9]). The theory assembles types. Typological thought was typical of early modernism in the twentieth century, whose echoes were still to be heard in the 1960s. Typologies are a means of reducing complexity. While a matrix such as that in schema 2 permits all logically conceivable combinations, a typology only allows certain combinations; these it asserts to be the ones that have been most important in historical reality. The form of such a typology can be represented as something like the matrix in schema 3.

| Category (class of states of affairs) | Set of alternative possibilities (subclasses) in a category (two or a maximum of three) | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| $X$ | $x_1$ | $x_2$ | $x_3$ |
| $Y$ | $y_1$ | $y_2$ | – |
| $Z$ | $z_1$ | $z_2$ | – |
| … | … | … | … |
| | Type 1 | Type 2 | Type 3 |

Schema 3

A tripartite typology of this kind—an indication that there is no binary structure behind the textual possibilities—is developed, for example, by Stanzel. In his work, it presents itself in the familiar form of his classification of the speech situations in narrative texts, or, as he calls them, typical narrative situations. He divides them into three forms: first-person narration, authorial narration, and figural narration. Each of these types inherently represents a combination of features from different categories or subcategorizations. To assist students, perhaps, we might wish to provide a logical reconstruction of Stanzel's distinctions. That is to say, we would attempt to specify the questions that should be asked about a text or seg-

[9] In, for example, Genette (1972), (1983).




Schema 4

ment of a text in order to determine which of Stanzel's types is present. Schema 4 presents a possible version of such a reconstruction.

Decision-making process:

1. Question 1: Does the text grammatically (i.e. using first-person pronouns) indicate the presence of a speaker for the overall text?
   If *yes*, then either a first-person narrative situation or an authorial narrative situation is present (1a).
   If *no*, then either an authorial narrative situation or a figural narrative situation is present (1b).
2. If answer (1a) was chosen, proceed to Question 2: Is the speaker ('I,' 'we') part of the represented story?
   If *yes*, then a first-person narrative situation is present (2a).
   If *no*, then an authorial narrative situation is present (2b).
3. If answer (1b) was chosen, proceed to Question 3: Does the text contain commentaries, judgements, and the like that are not attributed to a character but must be ascribed to a superior authority?
   If *yes*, then an authorial narrative situation is present (3a).
   If *no*, then a figural narrative situation is present (3b).

Three different questions must be answered, and these questions relate to completely different categories which are themselves combined in such a why that even the conventionally most common narrative situation, Stanzel's authorial narrative situation, subsumes the combinations (1a) + (2b) and (1b) + (3a). In reality, the whole business is even more complicated because further properties that belong to completely different categories again are attributed to the three narrative situations. Even so, the remarks made here should be sufficient to demonstrate why typologies do

not provide particularly good structures for theories. But why should a theorist of Stanzel's intelligence choose just such a method? The reason lies in the fact that Stanzel links literary theory and literary history from the start, instead of keeping them clearly distinct and separate, which would really be better for both. He links them because he is concerned not least with genre theory and genre history. He is not interested in a subtheory that provides an exhaustive list of all the logical possibilities and all their conceivable combinations such that it could be used to reconstruct a diverse variety of narrative forms ranging from those documented in the past to those possible in the future. Instead, and from the start, his attention is directed only at those feature combinations that have played an important role in the history of the literary genre of the novel up to the time at which he writes.

## 4. Subtheories in Narrative Theory

The areas which currently existent theoretical texts, grouped together as 'narrative theory,' have commented on should now, if my thesis is correct, be treated as separate theoretical entities. Each of them is the subject of a different subtheory in a single textual theory, and each subtheory has its own completely distinct place in that textual theory. Before we attempt to distinguish the areas which these theories have studied, we must introduce two preliminary distinctions.

The first is an (imprecise) distinction that concerns the historical evolution of narrative theory. Here we can identify two classes of narrative theory: the traditional, prestructuralist group and the structuralist group.[10] The second distinction separates two levels of the text. It was introduced by French structuralism, but its relevance was in fact implicitly recognized by prestructuralist narrative theory too. For the present, we can understand the difference between the two levels as shown in schema 5.

[10] Examples of the first group are Booth (1961); Friedmann (1955); Lämmert (1955); Lubbock (1921); Müller (1948); Pouillon (1946); Stanzel (1964). Examples of the second group—Propp (1928) should of course be mentioned as a predecessor—are Barthes (1966); Bremond (1964), (1966), (1973); Chabrol (1973); van Dijk (1971); Dolezel (1973); Genette (1972), (1983); Genot (1979); Greimas (1970), (1972), (1976); Hamon (1983); Hendrick (1973); Lévi-Strauss (1960); Lotman (1972); Prince (1973); Renner (1983), (1987); Stierle (1973); Titzmann (1992), (2003); Todorov (1966), (1973).

| *discours* | *vs.* | *histoire* |
|---|---|---|
| ≈ manner of narration: the set of structures of representation ≈ the ways in which a narrated story is semiotically presented ≈ the narrative techniques chosen (e.g. choice of narrative situation, of perspective[s], of structure for the narrative, of linguistic methods, etc.) | | ≈ narrated story: the set of structures in the represented world ≈ the set of logically and chronologically ordered events and their temporal and spatial positions |

Schema 5

Simplifying the situation considerably, we can now make two statements about traditional narrative theory. First, it understood itself as a genre theory, a theory of literary linguistic texts (novels, stories, novellas). Second, it was a theory of the discours level of narration: it was concerned with how stories can be narrated but never considered the question of what a story is in the first place. It is of course perfectly legitimate and sensible to develop a theory of (narrative) discours, and the achievements of prestructuralist theorists such as Lämmert and Stanzel in this field were kept alive (and considerably improved) by structuralists such as Genette.

Propp (1928), a Russian formalist, also intended to develop a theory of a particular genre (the fairytale). But because his attempt to do so involved the level of the histoire (he identified regularities in narrated stories as genre markers), he is one of the main forerunners of structuralist narrative theory. It is now common knowledge that, even in the early structuralist period, his approach became disconnected from the theory of a specific genre and was generalized and transformed into a theory of the histoire *per se*[11]. So, even if the structuralist approaches can in theory practise genre theory and have indeed considered the theory of discours (e.g. Genette above all), they are distinguished by the addition of a new component: they are concerned with the theory of the histoire level and thus with a theory of narrative structure that is independent of both genre

[11] This occurs in Lévi-Strauss (1960); Bremond (1964), (1966).

and medium. Why? Because any given story, real or fictive, can, *mutas mutandis*, be narrated orally or in writing, in this or that language and/or in other semiotic systems, in literature and non-literature, and in a wide variety of media. The ancient Germanic story of the Nibelungen, for example, can be narrated in the Middle Ages as a verse or prose epic (*Nibelungenlied*, *Völsungasaga*, *Thidrekssaga*) or in the form of a narrative lyric (poetic *Edda*); in the eighteenth century, it can be adapted as a drama (e.g. Fouqué and Hebbel) or as an opera (Richard Wagner), where both of these forms entail further variation in the wide range of theatrical realizations they allow; and, in the twentieth century, it can be converted into the new medium of film (Fritz Lang). Speaking in simplified terms, the narrative structure of a story can remain constant, no matter how different its semiotic presentation in another text, another genre, or another medium may be[12]. (It is still true, of course, that the interpretatively reconstructable meaning of a story or text is modified if it is presented in a new form.)

Structuralist narrative theory, then, took a new question as its starting point: what is a narrative structure? What are the minimal conditions that must be met if we are to say that a text narrates a story (e.g. lyric, novel, film, etc.) or that a story can be abstracted from it (e.g. drama, cycle of paintings, etc.)? What classes of factors must be present, what classes can be present? What different narrative structures are possible?

For historical reasons, more ideological than objective, concerning the evolution of theory and the thought behind it, these approaches have been at least partially forgotten in the literary theory of the last two decades, even though they have much to contribute and achieve, not least in genre and interpretation theories. They should really have been taken further and improved if necessary; instead, we had to wait for the "Narratology Research Group Hamburg" to perform the service of returning them and their potential benefits to the discourse of literary theory. As, however, they are doubtless still no more than partially remembered elsewhere, we shall now recapitulate the basic features of some key positions.

The question of what a narrative structure actually is and what possible alternative narrative structures there might be was investigated using a wide variety of approaches. Because they dealt with the question at different levels of abstraction and took different levels of the text as their ba-

[12] See, among others, Renner (1983); Titzmann (2003).

sis, these approaches were not mutually exclusive. Here, we shall consider four such variants of a theory of narrative structures. The first two are outlined in brief; the last two are described in greater depth because I believe they are more relevant to the theory and practice of interpretation.

1. Claude Bremond[13] attempted to answer the question at the level of a theory of actions. He argued that texts with narrative structure are those texts in which actions are narrated, and that every narrated action can be described as a complex process of assembling possibilities in the text and selecting from, or choosing between, these paradigmatic alternatives. Different kinds of action can be grouped into different classes of action on the basis of the particular context involved and by referring to the perspectives of the characters concerned. These action classes correspond to the classification of the characters involved in the actions as the bearers of action roles.

2. Julien Algirdas Greimas[14] took as his starting point a semiotic square derived from logic. The terms of the square can have different semantic values in each text. The transitions that take place between the semantically interpreted terms of the square in each particular text constitute the narrated story of that text. Greimas's model was thought-provoking but also presented a problem. It tends to encourage unrestricted and arbitrary interpretation: an invariant base structure is meant to allow the derivation of any number of narratives, in fact, all the conceivable narratives of this world; but there is no mediation between concrete textual semantics such as would be reconstructed in the interpretation of a particular text and the abstract semantic framework that Greimas derives for just such texts—there is no usable, definable, or even recognizable sequence that leads from the level of the concrete text to the level of Greimas's model.

The two models that we shall now consider are relevant to narrative theory and interpretation in a completely different way.

3. Gerald Prince[15] provided a precise explanation of the conditions that must be fulfilled by a minimal story (the minimal conditions that must be met for a statement to have a narrative structure and be a narrative text).

13 Bremond (1964), (1966), (1973).
14 Greimas (1970), (1976).
15 Prince (1973).

His concept of the minimal story does not distinguish clearly between histoire and discours, between the theory of narrative structures and the theory of narrative texts. His minimal story is not only the smallest possible unit of narrative structure at the histoire level but also the smallest possible form of a narrative text at the discours level. However, a generalizable narratology requires the concept of narrative structure to be defined independently of the variable forms a story can take at the discours level; it must be defined as a phenomenon of the histoire level and the histoire level alone. For this reason, I have taken the liberty of providing a slightly altered reformulation of Prince's definition below.

A text (or segment thereof) has a narrative structure if and only if

1. the following can be derived from it:
1.1. (at least) one state-describing proposition $p_1$ that refers to an (initial) state in the represented world at $t_1$
1.2. (at least) one change-describing proposition $p_2$ that refers to a transformation of the initial state that takes place at $t_2$
1.3. (at least) one state-describing proposition $p_3$ that refer s to the (final) state of the world at $t_3$
2. where
2.1. $t_1$, $t_2$, and $t_3$ are successive points or spaces in time in the represented world,
2.2. the (final) state ($S_f$) of the world at $t_3$ must be a product of the transformation at $t_2$,
2.3. the initial state ($S_i$) and final state ($S_f$) must stand in opposition to one another with respect to (at least) one feature,
2.4. the three propositions must make statements about one and the same term.

Accordingly, the set of propositions or sentences 'Joe was unhappy. Then Joe fell in love with Jenny. Then (and as a result) Joe was happy'—and each of its semantic equivalents at the discours level—is a text with a narrative structure. Since we feel the example text to be a complete narrative, but not necessarily an example of a possible discours equivalent, we make three supplemental distinctions.

3. A text (or segment thereof) has a complete and explicit narrative structure if all three propositions are explicitly represented in *sentences* that are independent of one another.
4. A text (or segment thereof) has an incomplete narrative structure if (at least) one of the propositions is neither explicitly nor implicitly represented in a *sentence*. In 'Yesterday Joe came before the court,' a statement of change of state is made, but the initial and final states remain set to null. Conversely, a text (or segment thereof) can represent two opposing states, $S_i(t_i)$ and $S_f(t_3)$, of a single entity in the world while leaving the state-changing event set to null.
5. A text (or segment thereof) has an implicit narrative structure if (at least) one of the propositions is represented no more than implicitly in a *sentence* of the text (e.g. 'At last Joe is no longer unhappy,' where $p_3$ is explicit but $p_1$ only implicit)

or if the propositions are not distributed across three distinct *sentences* or sets of *sentences*[16].

In my reformulation, the propositions which are derivable from the text and constitute its narrative structure do not need not be identical with the *sentences* of the text. This means that a structure of this kind can underlie texts of different lengths and different linguistic (or other) forms. At any rate, Prince's model is relevant not only to narrative theory but also to interpretation—it makes possible the microanalysis of texts or segments of texts.

4. Jurij Lotman[17] proposes a model that is also relevant to narrative theory and interpretation; in addition, it is particularly suited to the macroanalysis of complex and extensive texts. Of all the structuralist models of the minimal narrative structure proposed to date, I believe that it is the most efficient and powerful in terms of both narrative theory and interpretation theory. There are three reasons for this.

1. Lotman takes neither actions (like Bremond) nor occurrences (like Prince) but events as his starting point. Now, not all actions and not all occurrences are events, even if they meet Prince's conditions. 'Lighting a cigarette,' for example, is an action, an occurrence, which is trivial if a habitual smoker performs it in a place where smoking is permitted; but it becomes an event when a non-smoker performs the action or a smoker performs it in a non-smoking area. Furthermore, a text can represent many actions and occurrences, but they do not all need to have the same degree of eventfulness. Lotman's theory provides implicit and explicit criteria that specify the conditions under which actions and occurrences become events and that allow us to reconstruct an internal hierarchy of events[18].
2. While Prince reconstructs the simple narrative, the minimal story, at the discours level, Lotman's model allows us to analyse and interpret narrative structures and narrative texts of any level of complexity.
3. A model of the type developed by Greimas reduces the individuality of texts to highly restricted fundamental structures; Lotman's model also has a very simple basic form, but that form is as flexible as we want it

[16] Titzmann (2003: chap. 5.2.).
[17] Lotman (1972).
[18] Cf. Titzmann (2003: chap. 5.2.).

to be—it can be refined enough to reconstruct the individuality of any text.

The familiar conditions that must be met by a minimal narrative structure as set out in Lotman's model of narrative structure are outlined below.

1. A text (or segment thereof) has a narrative structure if and only if (at least) one event takes place in the represented world.
2. An event takes place when a textual entity (animate or inanimate, human or not-human) is shifted across the boundary between two semantic spaces, whether actively as the subject of an action (e.g. '*X* kills *Y*'), or passively as the object of an action ('*Y* is killed by *X*') or a occurrence ('*Y* is struck by lightning'). (In the first two examples, *Y* crosses a boundary as well as *X*. *X* crosses that between conformance to the norm and violation of the norm; *Y* crosses that between life and death.)
3. A semantic space $SSp_i$ is an ideological semantic subsystem of a represented world, where

3.1. this system, $SSp_1$, consists of a set (of any size) of properties that are correlated amongst themselves (e.g. ontological, biological, social, psychological, etc. facts);

3.2. this set, $SSp_1$, stands in opposition to another semantic space $SSp_2$ with respect to (at least but potentially any amount more than) one property;

3.3. either the opposition is specified as relevant by cultural factors at the pretextual level (i.e. in the contextual knowledge of the time), or its relevance is established by the text itself (or a segment thereof). That is, the opposition marks a boundary, the crossing of which is specified (culturally or textually) as non-trivial—perhaps it brings with it a significant change of state in a character; perhaps it is sanctioned, perhaps it is felt to be unusual or improbable or impossible. Membership of any $SSp_i$ is the rule in the represented world; the transition from $SSp_i$ to some $SSp_{not\text{-}i}$ is a deviation from it[19].

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[19] Titzmann (2003: chap. 5.2.).

This is not the place to consider in detail the potential applications of Lotman's approach and the further refinements to which it has been subjected[20]. Instead, the reader's attention is drawn specifically to the important completion, extension, and reformulation of Lotman's model in Renner (1983 and 1987). Renner treats a semantic space not as a set of semantic properties but as a set of propositions, of regularities that constitute the fundamental order of a semantic space. The event of a boundary crossing takes place when a character violates this fundamental order. Reformulating a set of properties into a set of propositions has the additional advantage, as Renner shows, of introducing the possibility of logical formalization. The text theory he outlined, of course, must have been a little too inventive for his contemporaries, if my interpretation of the relative lack of response to his work is correct.

Once again, I state the apparently trivial fact that we must distinguish between narrative texts (texts, such as the ballad or the novel, that 'narrate' in the standard sense of the word) and narrative structures. All narrative texts have narrative structures, but narrative structures can also be found in texts which are non-narrative (e.g. dramas, operas, cycles of paintings) but nonetheless allow a story to be abstracted from them. Even in a text of, say, philosophical, logical, or scientific discourse, from which a story cannot be abstracted, a segment with narrative structure can appear at any time—all it takes is for an anecdote, for example, to be narrated, perhaps in support of a thesis. Texts of psychoanalysis or psychotherapy are particularly likely to contain many segments with narrative structure: case studies.

## 5. The Place of Narratological Subtheories in a Systematic Textual Theory

### 5.1. The Theory of Narrative Situations

The various classifications of possible narrative situations that have been developed are in no way specific to narrative texts, whether we take, to give no more than two examples, a classification in the manner of Stanzel or one in the (superior) manner of Genette. Every linguistic text can also be characterized according to its particular speech situation (in contrast to

[20] Such themes are considered in, for example, Renner (1983), (1987); Titzmann (2003).

its spoken situation). By the term 'speech situation' we mean the total set of propositions that can be derived from the text concerning its internal—potentially fictive—pragmatic situation (in contrast to the real, external pragmatic situation involving the sender and receiver of the text).

The first distinction to be made is whether or not the role of an internal speaker in the text is filled by supplying a speaker. Many approaches postulate that an internal speaker exists in all texts; I believe it is more appropriate to refer to a speaker only when, for instance, it makes itself grammatically explicit (with first-person singular or plural pronouns) or implicit (e.g. by explicitly filling the role of the hearer [using second-person singular or plural pronouns], or by posing questions or making appeals that imply the presence of a hearer and thus also a speaker). To demonstrate more clearly what I have in mind, we can return to Stanzel's typology. His first-person and authorial narrative situations can be seen as instances where the speaker role is filled, the figural narrative situation as a case where the speaker role is not filled.

There can be one and only one speaker of the overall text, but it is perfectly legitimate for there to be several hearers (e.g. if a group is addressed or different segments of the text can be shown to be directed at different hearers). If the text has two speakers such that different segments of the text are allocated to the speech of each, we have a level two speech situation, where each speaker is only a speaker for part of the text. This can occur even if there is no speaker for the overall text (obviously the standard situation in the drama; also possible in the lyric, e.g. Horace's ode III:9, "Donec gratus eram tibi," or, in the German lyric, Uhland's "Das Schloß am Meer" and Nietzsche's "Der Freigeist"). The texts of such subspeakers can contain embedded level three speech situations which have their own speakers and hearers with further embedded speech situations, which themselves contain more speech situations, and so on. (The complex model in the *Arabian Nights* is a well-known example.)

Once the function of speaker or hearer(s) is filled at one of these levels, the text has the opportunity to specify the features of its speaker(s) and hearer(s) in any way it wants. It can assign biological, social, or psychological features to them; it can provide them with a background; it can give them any degree of concrete presence; and it can make statements about the place and time of the speaker's act of speech or writing and the analogous acts of listening or reading of the hearer(s).

But even if the text does not fill the function of a level one speaker, a speech situation can still be reconstructed for it. This is because, even if

nobody inside the text is identified as its speaker, the nature of language forces the text into specifying the temporal position of its speech act relative to the spoken situation by means of verbal tenses and, in some cases, temporal deictics. The use of the preterite indicates that the spoken situation chronologically precedes the speech situation, the future indicates the opposite relationship, and the present tense can indicate that both are simultaneous. At one extreme, speech situation and spoken situation can share no elements or features whatsoever; or they can overlap to varying degrees; or, at the other extreme, they can be largely coincident if the speech situation is itself the object of speech, that is, if it is simultaneously the spoken situation (this is often the case in Goethe's early lyrics, e.g. "Erwache Friederike"). If the role of speaker is filled, it would then be appropriate to ask the question (which distinguishes first-person and authorial narratives in Stanzel's typology) of whether the speaker is itself part of the spoken situation, as is equally possible whether the spoken situation precedes, succeeds, or coincides with the speech situation.

The theory of narrative situations, then, is part of a general theory of speech situations, and the idea that narrative texts deserve special treatment in the latter is dubious, to say the least. As every texts is characterized by a speech situation, the theory of speech situations deserves to be given a high-level position in any textual theory.

### 5.2. The Discours/Histoire Distinction

The narratological distinction between discours and histoire should also be reduced to a more general distinction that is relevant to all texts and thus deserving of a high-level position in a new textual theory.

| *Means of representation* | *vs.* | *Represented world* |
|---|---|---|
| set of all the means used to semiotically present the represented world (including, if applicable, narrative techniques) | | set of the propositions implicitly or explicitly asserted as true by the text from which they are derived; ordered according to the scope of their validity |

Schema 6

We must now explain what we mean by the scope of a proposition's validity. Many propositions of the represented world claim to be valid for all the terms in a class (entities, times, spaces): 'All men are mortal,' for example. Others are endowed with no more than a limited validity; they only apply, perhaps, to a particular space, time, or character (or set of characters). 'Although Jenny always loved Joe, she spent two weeks wondering whether to leave him' thus implies a proposition of unlimited validity and a proposition of limited validity. Or, take the following hypothetical weather forecast:

> After today's ($t_1$) fine weather, tomorrow ($t_2$) it will be overcast throughout the United Kingdom ($l_1$). No precipitation is expected in London ($l_1^a$); in Edinburgh ($l_1^b$) there will be hail in the morning ($t_2^a$) and rain in the afternoon ($t_2^b$).

Here we are presented with a set of propositions whose validity is limited spatially or temporally to a greater or lesser degree. They can therefore be ordered according to their scopes:

Schema 7

1. $p(l_1, t_1)$; $p(l_1, t_2)$.
2. $p(l_1^a, t_2)$.
3. $p(l_1^b, t_2^a)$; $p(l_1^b, t_2^b)$.

(The expressions in parentheses indicate the limits of the scope of each proposition's validity.)

The structure of the narrated world of a philosophical or theoretical text may well distinguish it to some extent or another from any literary text, whatever the genre, and the relevance of the representational techniques involved may well differ considerably between the two text types. But nonetheless, the two levels can be distinguished in all classes of texts (it should be remembered here that we can only approach the represented world through its semiotic presentation). Thus, the distinction between the two levels is not unique to narrative texts or texts with narrative structure.

Before we conclude our discussion of this topic, let us cast a brief glance at the relationship between the two pairs of concepts that we have put forward (speech situation vs. spoken situation, representation vs represented world). It is clear that the speech situation, like the spoken situation, or represented world, can only be accessed through its semiotic (e.g. linguistic) presentation. Now, because a narrated story, for example, can be considerably modalized and modified as a result of the choice of

speech situation, the latter evidently belongs to the means of semiotic presentation. On the other hand, it also belongs to the represented world in so far as we can deduce from it or its relationship to the spoken situation propositions which the text asserts to be true and which thus belong to the world of the text.

### 5.3. Chronological Structuring

The represented world of a text can only have a narrative structure if it simultaneously has a chronological structure. But it can also have a chronological structure without having a narrative structure. Although an annalist's chronicle has a chronological structure, it does not narrate a story—neither in the theoretical sense of the definitions of, say, Prince or Lotman, nor in the everyday sense of the word 'narration.' Take the following text:

> The French Revolution broke out in 1789. (1)
> …
> …
> The First World War raged between 1914 and 1918. (2)

The text creates a world with a chronological structure, a world in which there are chronologically ordered occurrences. Each of the segments (1) and (2) could be expanded into a narrative; the overall text (1 + 2) would then contain two segments, each narrative in itself, but would not be narrative as a whole. The weather forecast discussed above also has a chronological structure, but it too is not narrative; it states a description of what will be the case in different places at different times. Chronologization, therefore, is a phenomenon that can appear in texts without narrative structure; it is thus more general than narrative structure. It is the product of a decision that is located at a higher level than the decision whether or not to use a narrative structure. This higher level of the theory is where we must place everything that narrative theories have said about how the chronological structures of a histoire are represented in discours—the statements of these theories relate to all texts which create chronological worlds, not just those that are narrative or contain narrative structures for all or part of their length.

At this point, we should mention the example of the distinction that has come to be known by the same most unfortunate terms with which it

was first introduced: the relationship between narrative time and narrated time[21]. ‘Narrative time’ in its original sense is taken to mean the actual temporal duration of the act of narration (or the act of reading the text), not such things as the—potentially fictive—length of time which speakers say the act of narration or writing requires or required (e.g. ‘I wrote the words that follow between Christmas and Easter’). This allows situations such as isochrony, acceleration, and deceleration to be distinguished according to whether narrative time is equal to, shorter than, or longer than narrated time respectively. I would suggest that this concept of narrative time should be replaced by another concept that we can refer to as ‘narrative tempo.’ This new concept has the advantage of being quantifiable and comparable inside and between texts. Narrative tempo is expressed in the relation between the quantitative size of an occurrence’s representation (the quantity of signs used) and the temporal duration of a represented state of affairs, occurrence, or event as asserted by the text. Thus, a text yields a zero temporal status if at the histoire level it asserts the existence of a space of time (five and ten years in the examples below) that is not represented in the discours, that is, a space of time which has no corresponding set of signs to make statements about it at the discours level. This is the case, for instance, in the following example sentences:

1. Jenny left him. Five years later, Joe was still deeply upset.
2. Jenny left Joe. Ten years later, she married Jack.

The two examples differ, of course, in whether the chronological gap can, at least in part, be bridged semantically. In (1) the gap is bridged by the presupposition which underlies ‘still’ in so far as it provides us with what is at least an implicit statement about the state of Joe during the five years. In (2), on the other hand, it is utterly impossible to bridge the gap.

Mention should also be made here of the relation between the syntagmatic sequence in which states of affairs are reported or events narrated in the discours and the chronological sequence which the text asserts that those states of affairs or events have in the histoire. This explains the well-known fact that the discours of the text can reference states of affairs or events in a syntagmatic order which does not correspond to the underlying chronological order which it assigns to the histoire. The phenomenon in question is found if, for example, the text narrates the death of its

[21] Müller (1948); also Lämmert (1955).

protagonist and only then supplies the story that led to the death. Such cases have come to be known as chronological anticipation and retrospection—the situations in which a filled or unfilled speaker role, when talking about a particular space in time $t_i$ of the histoire, refers back to an earlier space in time $t_{i-x}$ (1) or points forward to a future one $t_{i+x}$ (2):

> And so Jenny now left Joe. Five years from then, he would still be deeply upset. (2) Jenny, however, found herself a new lover straight after breaking up; he met her needs better than Joe had done even at the start of their relationship. (1)

### 5.4. The Composition of Anthropomorphic Characters

Whether or not a text attempts to provide its represented world with a chronological structure; whether or not, if it attempts to do so, it also contains a narrative structure; and whether, if it contains such a structure, it is a narrative text or belongs to another text type—one thing is certain: the world that the text represents consists of certain entities (Platonic ideas, say, in text on the history of philosophy; electrons or quarks, perhaps, in a text on physics). By necessity, worlds with narrative structures contain entities that are active performers of actions and events or passively affected by them. If we add the new sentence ‘Joe later killed Jack out of jealousy’ to the text we have been developing, we have filled both the active and the passive roles, and both characters cross a boundary in Lotman’s sense—Joe has moved into a space that violates the norm, Jack into a space of death. In literary and non-literary narratives, such entities that are affected actively or passively by occurrences are, as a rule, anthropomorphic characters—linguistically produced entities that simulate conceivable human persons. Because traditional narrative theory was interested primarily in discours structures, it was left to structuralist (or structuralist-influenced) narrative theory to explore the question of how texts compose such anthropomorphic characters, how they attribute properties to them, how they imbue them with rudimentary or more sophisticated equivalents of psychological structures, how they motivate their behaviour (or how they establish causal or other relations between their properties and behaviour), and so on[22]. This topic, where a not insubstantial amount of theoretical work remains to be done, need not be pursued further here.

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[22] See, for example, Lotman (1972); Pfister (1977).

For our purposes, it is important to note simply that, while texts with narrative structures necessarily involve agents or patients of the kind we have considered (anthropomorphic characters) in their occurrences, the presence of such characters is not confined to worlds with narrative structures. A non-narrative philosophical dialogue from the classical period or the Renaissance contains them just as much as, say, a love poem, a linguistic portrayal of a human being encountered in real life, and so on. When narratological theories have considered the processes and problems of the linguistic composition of such beings, they have again been theorizing about states of affairs that are not confined to narrative texts or texts with narrative structure.

### 5.5. The Theory of Narrative Structures

We have already seen that narrative structures are not unique to narrative texts (ballads, stories, novels); they are equally capable of appearing in other text types (lyrics, historical writing, philosophical texts, etc.) and can even be essential elements of them (dramas and operas). They can also appear in statements made in other semiotic systems and media (films, comic strips, advertising, cycles of paintings). They should, therefore, be given an important place in any textual theory as genre- and medium-independent structures. In the logical structure of the system, they would be superior and prior to genre theory, for example.

### 5.6. Genre Theory

Only by referring to the history of critical thought can we explain why genre theory was still treated as such an important theme in the previous century and why genre-crossing or genre-independent structural possibilities (such as those outlined by way of example in 5.1. to 5.5. above) were considered in the context of genre theories (in this case theories of narrative texts)[23]. If we see genres (note the plural) as the subset of possible text types that has been pragmatically relevant to the processes of production and reception in the course of literary history, we should reconstruct the historical text types in this set as combinations of features, of choices between paradigmatic alternative ways of forming a text. A textual theory of the kind put forward here provides the means of reconstructing them.

[23] See Hempfer (1973) on genre theory in general.

In such a theory, genres are essentially logically subordinate objects of minor significance because they are created by genre-independent, superordinate choices.

Only one example need be outlined here. The genre of the drama can be reconstructed as a text type in which the decisions set out below, none of which is specific to the drama, have been made[24].

1. The level one speaker role (i.e. the speaker of the overall text) is unfilled.
2. The level two speaker or hearer role is filled by at least one, usually several entities. Each of these entities can alternate between functioning as speaker and hearer.
3. The overall text is divided into the obligatory oral speech of speakers and the optional presence of speakerless side-texts.
4. Any side-texts that do occur make statements about non-verbal structures and occurrences in the represented world which do not follow from the speakers' speech (1) but can be confirmed by it (2):
   JOE (smokes silently [1] and nods [2]).
   JENNY: You nodded?
5. The speaker and hearer roles are typically filled by anthropomorphic characters.
6. The represented world has a chronological structure, and the syntagmatic sequence of the representation is identical with the chronological order of what it represents.
7. The represented world has a narrative structure. A story can be abstracted from the text.

That should be sufficient. Other text types (e.g. ballads, epistolary novels) can be reconstructed in a similar way.

### 5.7. Conclusion

The distinctions which are made in the narratological theories available today were not specific to narrative texts even when theorists saw themselves as genre theorists. Narrative theories contributed far more to a general textual theory than they, or at least the prestructuralist ones, were aware; and they outlined descriptive categories that are relevant some-

[24] Cf. Pfister's important book: Pfister (1977).

times to the complete set of all texts, sometimes to subsets of texts which, even then, are far more inclusive than the set of narrative texts. When they misunderstood themselves as genre theories, it was inevitable that they failed to see their real breadth as textual theories. Genre theories, theories, perhaps, of narrative texts, have a very low position in the internal hierarchy of textual theory; it seems reasonable, therefore, to postulate that none of the distinctions introduced by narratology to text theory is specific to any one genre.

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# Narrative Theory and/or/as Theory of Interpretation

"Structuralism is over"—and narratology, ever since the supposed demise of the school of literary theory which established it, has been continually deluged with proposals for a change of direction or even a complete paradigm shift[1]. Despite their marked differences in outlook, the manifestoes for a 'new' narratology have a common weakness in their argumentative foundation. Almost without exception, they assume that it is sufficient, in establishing the basis for a new research programme under the old name 'narratology,' to designate the object domain of the relevant theory via the term 'narrative,' and then to state the aims to be achieved with the aid of that theory. In our view, however, a convincing definition of narratology can only be provided by going beyond the issue of the object domain and giving appropriate consideration to a question which so far has scarcely been mentioned, let alone treated systematically—the question of the relationship of narrative theory to other areas of literary theory which may be similar or adjacent. Our paper explores this issue, taking the example of the relationship of narrative theory to the theory of interpretation. Our reflections on the subject follow the standard procedure for the systematic explication of concepts, endeavouring to define terms more precisely in the light of their previous uses[2]. Looking at some of the generally accepted definitions of narratology, we try to arrive at a more spe-

[1] See the general surveys by Tolliver (1997); Herman (1999); Fludernik (2000); Nünning (2000) and Nünning/Nünning (2002).

[2] On the method of explicating concepts see Carnap (1950); Pawlowski (1980); Danneberg (1988) and Müller (1988).

cific characterization of its position within literary studies. We begin by examining the typical distinctions drawn in the philological disciplines between narrative theory and the theory of interpretation. A brief critique of these distinctions is then followed by a more detailed discussion of a particular view of the relationship between the narratological and interpretive explanation of texts.

## 1. Narratology and Interpretation

Reviewing the debate on the position of narratology, we have examined (a) whether contributing, in whatever way, to the interpretation of literary texts is regarded as a task proper to narratology, and (b) how the relationship, if any, of narratology to interpretation has been defined. Broadly speaking, there seem to be two basic ways of characterizing the relationship between narrative theory and the theory of interpretation. According to one view, which nowadays is seldom encountered, narratology is not concerned with interpreting individual texts, but with determining the general characteristics of narrative. Endorsing this emphasis on the independence of narratology, Gerald Prince has repeatedly warned against seeing the investigation of narrative as a mere interpretive tool: "[N]arratology has proven to be an important participant in the assault against viewing literary studies as devoted above all to the interpretation of texts"[3]. This understanding of narrative theory is given an even sharper formulation by Nilli Diengott in her reply to Susan S. Lanser's proposal to combine narratology with feminism. Diengott sees narrative theory as part of a systematic poetics, and therefore condemns Lanser's idea as a category mistake: "Lanser is interested in interpretation, but narratology is a totally different activity"[4]. A more common view in literary studies, however, is that the possibilities or even the intrinsic tasks of narrative theory include contributing to the interpretation of texts. However, the adherents of this position fail to agree about the precise nature of narra-

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3 Prince (1995: 130). In this connection it is also instructive to look at Seymour Chatman's critical discussion of Jonathan Culler's attempt to deconstruct the instruments of narratology. In Chatman's account, to neglect the distinction drawn by narrative theory between meanings and values is "to reintroduce interpretation into narratology and thus into poetics in general," Chatman (1988: 15).

4 Diengott (1988: 49). See also Lanser (1986), (1988); Prince (1996).

tology's contribution—actual or potential—to the interpretation of literary works.

With regard to this question, too, it is possible to distinguish between two basic positions. First, there is the view that narratology is an interpretive approach in its own right, or at least has the potential to become one; second, there is the notion that narrative theory is a kind of auxiliary discipline in the service of interpretive theory. The first view is found in the many contemporary contributions which argue in favour of a 'contextualist' narratology. The examples that spring to mind include Susan S. Lanser's abovementioned feminist narratology, Ansgar Nünning's project of a narratology combined with cultural history[5], or the programme for a cognitive narratology drawn up and tentatively illustrated by Manfred Jahn and David Herman[6]. Heterogeneous though they may be, these approaches share the common conviction that narrative theory should not confine its attention to the texts themselves, but should also take account of their contexts, and that, at the same time, it should be developed further, moving on from structuralist analysis to a functional study of literature[7]. As a rule, these 'contextualist' approaches to narratology fail to consider their own relationship to other interpretive approaches or to a general theory of interpretation. The second position, with the expectation that narrative theory should contribute to interpretation but not supply the entire reading of a text, also has to be analyzed more closely, in view of the wide variety of functions it assigns to narratology viewed as an auxiliary discipline in textual interpretation.

Here too, it is possible to distinguish between two sub-positions. The first group takes the view that narratology cannot supply a comprehensive reading of texts, but can nevertheless provide a kind of basic interpretation, which can also yield criteria for evaluating more detailed interpreta-

5 See Nünning (2000).

6 See, for example, Jahn (1997), (1999); Herman (2001). See also Jens Eder's contribution to the present volume.

7 The articles listed in note 1 above provide a general guide to the flood of 'new' narratologies which has swamped literary studies since the mid-1980s. Referring to these developments in narrative theory, Darby speaks of a shift towards 'functionalist' narratology: see Darby (2001). However, the general term 'contextualist,' proposed by Chatman, would seem more appropriate, as the distinctive feature of these various new approaches to narratology consists in the demand to include context, rather than in an interest in the functions of individual text elements. See Chatman (1990b).

tions. This position has been most emphatically formulated by Umberto Eco, who has repeatedly sought to show that a pragmatic theory of narrative can be used to determine the intentions of a narrative text and thereby to establish a basis for evaluating interpretations of that text[8]. In the view of the second group, narratology is not a theory but a heuristic for interpretation. The exponents of this view hold that interpretations can neither be derived from narrative theory nor refuted with its help; at best, narratological analysis can only supply points of reference for stimulating, structuring and problematizing interpretations. This reflects the narratological approach of "low structuralism," epitomized by the work of Franz K. Stanzel and Gérard Genette, which has dominated the debate on narrative theory for many years[9]. In the introduction to a recently published collection of essays, Stanzel emphasizes once again that the aim of his contributions to narratology has always been "to present concepts and theories that prove their value as 'discovery tools' in dealing with specific works, by enabling the reader to achieve insights which would not have been available [...] without these theoretical instruments"[10]. In *Narrative Discourse,* Genette succinctly characterizes his own approach as "a procedure of discovery, and a way of describing"[11].

Summarizing the above, it is possible to distinguish between four conceptions of the nature and tasks of narratology, which can be characterized respectively as 'autonomist,' 'contextualist,' 'foundationalist,' and 'heuristic.'

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8 See, for example, Eco (1987), (1990) and (1992). See also Chatman (1990a) and Danto (1986).

9 On the distinction between "high" and "low" structuralism see Scholes (1974).

10 Stanzel (2002: 19–20) [original version German]. A similar formulation of the role of narratology is found at the end of Stanzel's *Theory of Narrative,* with the statement that his system of conceivable and actual narrative forms can also be used for the analysis of the individual narrative work and therefore "serve as a frame of conceptual reference for practical criticism," Stanzel (1986: 237).

11 Genette (1980: 265).

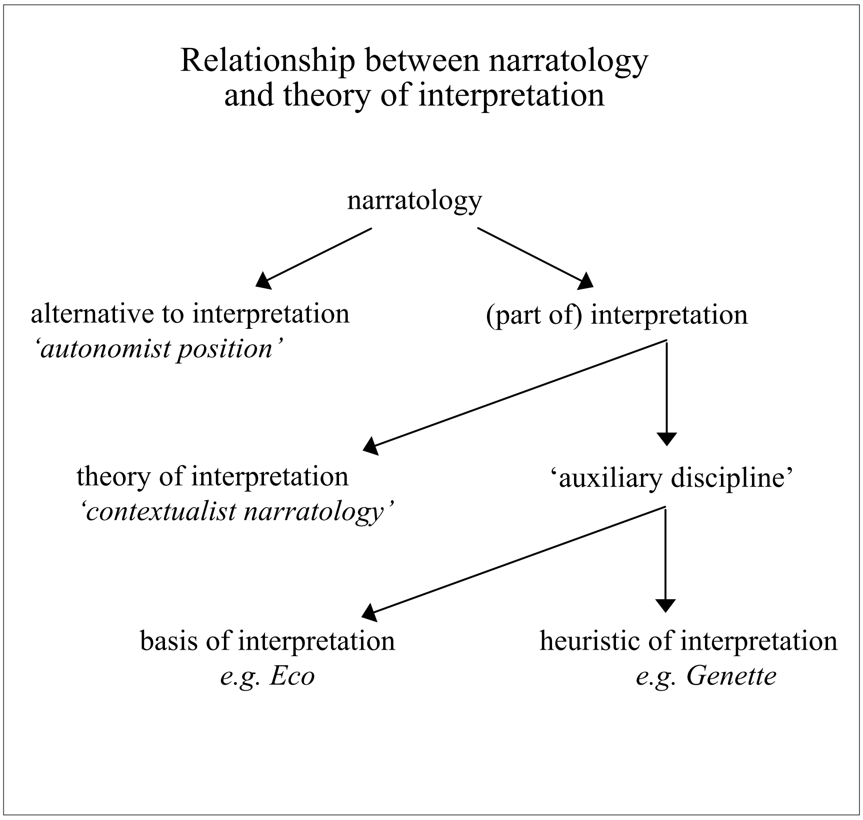



Fig. 1: Relationship between narrative theory and theory of interpretation

## 2. Against Autonomist, Contextualist and Foundationalist Conceptions of Narratology

Before moving on to look more closely at the conception of narratology as a heuristic for interpretation, we must explain briefly why we have refrained from explicating the other three ways of defining the relationship between narratology and interpretation.

Our reason for neglecting the 'autonomist' conception of narratology, which emerged from "high structuralism," has nothing to do with its low standing in the current debate on the future of narrative theory. The omission is due simply to the fact that the autonomist position on the relationship between narratology and interpretation is either glaringly inappropriate, or is compatible with our own definition of that relationship. In

its 'radical' version, autonomism leads to a categorical separation of narratology from interpretation—which in our view contradicts the intuitions of the scientific community concerned with literary texts. The 'moderates' in the autonomous camp are of the same opinion: they merely insist that narratology must not be reduced to the status of an auxiliary discipline in the service of interpretation—a demand which complies with the view of narrative theory as a heuristic for interpretation.

The reasons for neglecting the autonomist conception of narratology are no doubt more obvious than the grounds for leaving aside the 'contextualist' and 'foundationalist' views—both of which have not only enjoyed an increasing popularity in recent discussions, but also oppose a purely heuristic functionalization of the conceptual apparatus of narrative theory. In the present connection, however, we must confine ourselves to briefly indicating the problems of a narratology conceived as a means of helping its users to arrive at complex, or at least basic, interpretations of texts.

The aim of those who advocate a 'contextualist' narratology is to interpret texts in a historical and cultural context. Their point of departure lies in the realization that this aim cannot be achieved solely with the traditional tools supplied by the structuralist theory of narrative. But can this problem be solved by extending the scope of narratology and building it up into a theory of interpretation? The question has yet to be answered, or even addressed, by the exponents of contextualism. The problems of such an extension are already indicated by its elimination of the intuitively appreciated epistemological differences between narratological and interpretive ways of dealing with texts[12]. Extending narrative theory to embrace textual interpretation and the writing of literary history is problematic also because it burdens narrative theory with all the vexed issues which traditionally face interpretation and literary historiography[13]. Bearing this in mind, it is scarcely surprising that programmatic proposals for a contextualist narratology are often advanced but rarely implemented: in practice, contextualist analyses of narrative are limited to employing the classic vocabulary of narratology in interpretive contexts—a procedure which

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[12] See Kindt/Müller (2003b).

[13] Just as contextualism simply overlooks the possible heuristic uses of narratology in interpretation, it also seems not to notice that the complex problems which it sees as falling within the competence of narrative theory have already been discussed at length by theorists of interpretation.

does not reveal a new conception of narratology but merely illustrates the heuristic uses of the old approach[14].

The critique of the contextualist approach applies *a fortiori* to its 'foundationalist' counterpart. The latter proceeds from the observation that narrative analyses are, as a rule, intersubjectively graspable and therefore offer a generally accepted point of reference for the academic interpretation of texts. Inspired by this observation, foundationalism pursues the aim of developing narratology into an approach that makes it possible to monitor and evaluate interpretations of texts. However, the attempts to put the foundationalist project into practice have highlighted a very basic dilemma: if it is to assume any kind of function in evaluating interpretations, narrative theory has to be extended by adding further concepts, such as the notions of "textual intention" or the "implied author." Extensions of this kind, with awkward implications in terms of the theory of interpretation, deprive narratology of its character as an unproblematic point of reference for interpretations with different perspectives. In other words, the advantage of intersubjective intelligibility is lost in the attempt to apply narratological foundationalism to the domain of interpretation[15].

## 3. Narratology as a Heuristic Tool

The theoretical design flaws in the alternative ways of relating narrative to interpretive theory are not the only argument in favour of concentrating on the 'heuristic' conception of narratology. A further argument lies in the evident disproportion between the wide dissemination of narratology as a heuristic tool and the paucity of systematic theoretical attention devoted to it. Although narratology is used almost as a matter of course in literary studies as a language of description and an aid to discovery, its existence has scarcely been acknowledged in the more advanced theoretical discussions of the relationship between description and interpretation. If narratological concepts and descriptions are to be employed on anything more than an *ad hoc* basis in the academic interpretation of literary texts, it will be necessary to decide what those concepts should look like.

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[14] For a discussion of this, see e.g. our comments on Darby (2001) in Kindt/Müller (2003a).

[15] On the critique of 'foundationalism,' see Rorty (1994); Kindt/Müller (1999) and Müller (2000).

The aim, in other words, must be to define the *specific requirements* that narratology has to meet as a heuristic for interpretation, in addition to the set of *general criteria* with which it must comply as a language of scientific description (for example, the requirement that concepts be clear and readily susceptible of application, and be used in a way that is economical and free from contradiction)[16].

One crucial requirement is obvious, and can easily be stated in general terms. The conceptual apparatus has to be assembled in such a way that it remains compatible with a broad range of interpretive orientations, enabling it to be used equally by exponents of structuralism, intentionalism, reception theory, feminism and other academic approaches to the interpretation of literary works. To assess the consequences of this requirement, it is necessary to recall the basic structural features of the theories underlying literary interpretation. Theories of interpretation, in our view, generally comprise two basic elements, a "conception of meaning," specifying the type of meaning sought, and a "conception of interpretation," i.e. a set of assumptions and rules as to how such meaning is to be identified. The choice of a particular conception of meaning is not seen as a step that can be defended in purely epistemological terms, but as a decision based on the goals and values of the interpreter in question—on his or her views regarding the concept of art, the structure of language, the purpose of academic enquiry, etc.[17] The choice of a conception of meaning, framed by specific norms, provides a general guideline for the structure of the conception of interpretation, but does not define every detail of that structure in advance[18].

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[16] The theory of science has so far seen very little discussion of this topic: the structure, function and evaluation of heuristics have remained largely unexplored. Some observations on the linguistic and intellectual history of the concept are to be found in von Matuschka (1974) and Hartkopf (1987).

[17] See Danneberg/Müller (1984a) and Danneberg (1999).

[18] See Danneberg/Müller (1984b).

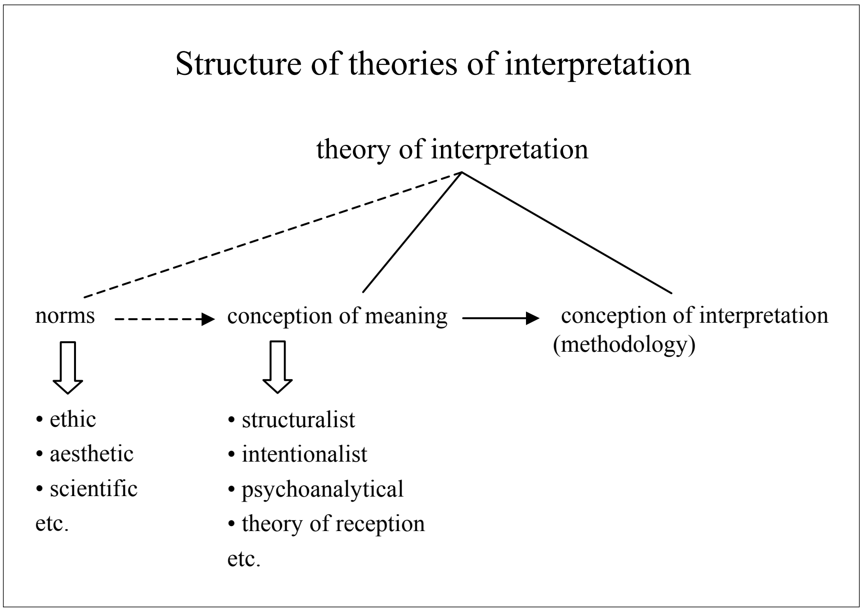



Fig. 2: Structure of theories of interpretation

Following these preliminary clarifications, it is now possible to arrive at a more exact formulation of the conditions that have to be satisfied by a theory of narrative capable of serving as a heuristic for interpretation. The main condition can be summarized thus: the concepts of narrative theory should be 'neutral' with regard to the theory of interpretation, so that their use remains independent of the choice of a concrete interpretive approach, i.e., so that it does not imply a decision in favour of a specific conception of meaning.

In the interests of clarity, we wish to add two further comments about this 'neutrality' requirement. First, it is obvious that almost any moderately ambitious discussion of texts (and therefore any narratological analysis) depends on 'interpretation' in a very basic sense—but precisely not in the sense of the specific form of interpretation practised by scolars of literature[19]. The purpose of the neutrality requirement is to delimit an area of textual analysis whose operations are to be seen as distinct from those of a particular 'type' of interpretation—such as the interpretive approaches associated with structuralism, intentionalism, reception theory or

[19] See Kindt/Müller (2003b).

feminism[20]. Second, we wish to make it quite clear that the criterion of neutrality with regard to the theory of interpretation is not intended primarily as a means of determining whether or not concepts used in investigations of narrative are genuinely 'narratological' in a narrower sense of the term. The real purpose of the criterion consists in the characterisation of a framework for the explication of existing narratological concepts.

However, the criterion of neutrality with regard to the theory of interpretation is not the only specific condition of adequacy that has to be fulfilled by a narratology capable of serving heuristic purposes. While this criterion guarantees that the concepts of narrative theory can be harnessed to a variety of interpretive approaches, it clearly does not suffice to define the boundaries of narratological theory formation for heuristic use. It is possible, with minimal effort, to construct a narratology meeting the neutrality requirement which, first, includes concepts that have no connection with any of the common notions of narrative[21] and, second, focuses on textual features that lack all relevance for interpretation[22]. As Thomas G. Pavel remarks, "heuristic value alone is a weak argument in favour of using a formal system in the humanities"[23]. It is necessary, therefore, to formulate a further specific requirement ensuring that the aspects to be investigated with the help of narratology are characteristic of narrative texts and are potentially relevant to their interpretation. One possible way of satisfying this requirement would consist in explicating the concept of narrativity on which the discussion of narratological approaches may be based. This, however, in view of the neverending controversy surrounding the question of narrativity, would probably prove fruitless[24]. Instead, the idea that narratology should focus on aspects of narrative texts that have a potential relevance for interpretation can be reflected in a way which is considerably simpler, and more likely to succeed, by establishing the following principle: narrative theory must take sufficient account of those models and concepts for the description of nar-

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20 A very similar idea is found Slawinski (1975: 69), and Currie (1990: 105).

21 Concepts taken from the study of metre, for example, would normally also meet the requirement for neutrality with regard to the theory of interpretation.

22 See in this respect the comments of Danneberg (1996: 223).

23 Pavel (1989: 103).

24 See the contributions of Fotis Jannidis, Jan Christoph Meister and Wolf Schmid in this volume. See also Prince (1999), Sternberg (2001) and Wolf (2002).

rative texts which have been developed since the nineteenth century in the fields of poetics, rhetoric and the professional analysis of literary texts.

The debate since the 1980s on the future of narrative theory has generally been marked by the suggestive assumption of an obligation to choose between a semantically restrained structuralism and a contextualism brimming with interpretive promise—between 'classical' and 'postclassical' narratology[25]. This alternative, as we have endeavoured to show, ignores a conception of narrative theory—i.e. the idea of narratology as a heuristic for interpretation—which in the past had, and indeed still has, an enormous practical significance. We have tried here to clarify the idea of such a narrative theory by briefly sketching two adequacy criteria: the concepts of narratology should be usable in conjunction with various approaches to interpretation (the criterion of *neutrality*), and the theory as a whole should take its initial orientation from the heuristically valuable concepts of twentieth-century narrative theory (the criterion of *continuity*).

25 See, concerning this distinction, Herman (1997) and (1999) and his contribution to the present volume.

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# Narratology and Theory of Fiction: Remarks on a Complex Relationship

In his book *Fiction and Diction*, Gérard Genette bemoans a contradiction between the pretense and the practice of narratological research[1]. Instead of studying all kind of narratives, for Genette, narratological research concentrates *de facto* on the techniques of fictional narrative. Correspondingly, Genette speaks of a “fictional narratology”[2] in the pejorative sense of a discipline that sets arbitrary limits on its area of study. In his objection, the narratology that literary scholars practice considers fictional narrative to be at least the standard case of any narrative[3]. In other words, what is merely a special case, within a wide field of narratives, is here elevated to narrative *par excellence*[4]. According to Genette, narratology

1 Cf. Genette (1993: 54).

2 “Or, quels que soient, au stade où nous sommes, les mérites et les défauts de la narratologie fictionnelle […],” Genette (1991: 66); the expression “narratologie fictionnelle,” unfortunately, is not preserved in the English translation: “Now, whatever strengths and weaknesses narratology may have in its current state […],” Genette (1993: 53).

3 Cf. Genette (1993: 54f.).

4 Except for the late Gérard Genette, Dietrich Weber is one of the few narratologists to emerge from literary studies who explicitly argues against an exclusion of non-fictional narratives from narrative theory. He takes literary narratives in general, fictional as well as non-fictional (“künstlerische Erzählliteratur, mag sie nun fiktional sein oder nicht”), to be the subject matter of literary narrative theory: Weber (1998: 7f.). A similar position can be found in Lamping (2000), particularly 217–19. However, a problematic identification of fictional and non-fictional narrative—as we will show—is

does not omit the domain of non-fictional narratives from its investigations with any justification, but rather annexes it without addressing its specific elements.

What are possible ways in which this perspective, which Genette criticizes as truncated, can be set right? Can the problem, as outlined, simply be solved by expanding the area of study in narratological research? Or are there not, perhaps, important differences between fictional and nonfictional narratives which seem to encourage narratological research, understood as a fundamental discipline of literary study, under the heading of "fictional narratology"?

In order to come to an answer here, we will first discuss the problem of differentiating between fictional and non-fictional narratives, as well as the possibility of a connection between narrative and fictionality theory. Second, we will expand our considerations to encompass pragmatic and historical aspects of narratives in order to delineate the scope of our proposal.

## 1.

Are there any characteristics of fictionality that do not depend upon context? As is well known, the discussion of this question is controversial among narratologists and philosophers of language. On one side—just to name the two classic antipodes—is Käte Hamburger, who, in her *Logik der Dichtung* (1957), attempts to work out a linguistic-philosophical basis for the singular phenomenon of fictional speech. John R. Searle formulates the counterposition. Based on J. L. Austin's remarks on literary discourse as consisting of feigned assertions, he understands fictional sentences as unserious "make-believe" and argues, in "The Logical Status of Fictional Discourse," that "[t]here is no textual property […] that will identify a text as a work of fiction"[5].

For any attempt to connect fiction theory with narratology, a radically relativistic approach in the wake of Searle offers little help. But what about Käte Hamburger's *Logik der Dichtung*? Let us examine what the

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one of the consequences of such an expansion, cf. for example Cobley (2001); Blayer/Sanchez (2002).

5 Searle (1975: 325).

"most brilliant representative of neo-Aristotelian poetics of our time"[6] can attribute to such an attempt.

Hamburger develops her position in sharp contrast to Hans Vaihinger's *Philosophie des Als Ob*[7] and Roman Ingarden's concept of "quasi-judgement" ("Quasi-Urteil") as developed in his *Das literarische Kunstwerk*[8]. Contrary to Vaihinger and Ingarden, Hamburger rejects to explain the phenomenon of literary fiction on the basis of the concept of "as though," because this would imply an element of deception:

> But Schiller did not form his character Marias Stuart as if she were the real Maria. If we nevertheless perceive her, or the world of any drama or novel, as fictive, this is based not on an as-if structure, but rather, so we might say, on an *as-structure*[9].

The definition of fiction in the sense of an "as-structure" is central to Hamburger's position. In order to demonstrate its theoretical assumptions and implications, Hamburger makes use of a formulation by Theodor Fontane:

> Theodor Fontane unwittingly once gave this definition of literary fiction: "A novel … should tell us a story in which we believe," and he meant by that that it ought to "allow us a world of fiction to momentarily appear as a world of reality"[10].

For Hamburger, the expression "to momentarily appear as a world of reality" precisely defines the state of literary fiction as "appearance or semblance of reality,"[11] although she understands this phrase in a much broader and, finally, different sense than it possesses in Fontane's realism. Differently to Fontane, the neo-Aristotelian Hamburger does not explicitly rely on the principle of a mimesis understood as imitation, but rather on the *presentation* of reality[12]. For Hamburger—and this crucial aspect is occasionally overlooked—the discussion of "appearance or semblance of reality" is completely independent of the content of the narrated, that is of the degree of reality of that, which, in literary fiction, is being narrated. In non-realistic forms of literature, e.g. fairy tale, science fiction, or fantasy,

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6 Genette (1993: 8).
7 Vaihinger (1911).
8 Ingarden (1960).
9 Hamburger (1993: 58).
10 Ibid.
11 Ibid.
12 Ibid.

the specific quality of literary fiction, in Hamburger's formulation, is most clearly recognizable.

> Even the fairy-tale appears as reality a reality as long as we, as we read it or watch it enacted, abide within it; but nevertheless it does not appear as if it were a reality. For inherent in the emaning of the as-if is the element of deception, and in turn the reference to a reality which is formulated in the irreal subjunctive precisely because as an as-if reality it *is* not that reality which it pretends to be. The as-reality, however, is semblance, the illusion of reality, which is called non-reality or fiction[13].

Based on a concept of literature as "presentation" (as opposed to "imitation"), Hamburger explains literary fiction as an imaginary objectivity—to use a phrase not coined by Hamburger herself. As such, literary fiction has a different status than deception because it is autonomous, that is, independent of reality. Correspondingly, Hamburger distinguishes between "ficticious" ("as-if structure") in the sense of "being feigned," and "fictive" ("as-structure"). The latter is to be understood as an imaginary objectivity that does not appears differently than it is, namely "semblance of reality"[14].

The outlined theoretical assumptions provide the basis for Hamburger's attempt to define epic fiction. She identifies linguistic properties of what she calls "fictive narration" ("fiktionales Erzählen")[15]. Among its particularities are:

– a modification of the language's temporal system: The preterite indicates, as epic preterite, a fictive presence. In so doing it loses its grammatical function of designating the narrated events as past events[16];

– a loss of the ordinary ("deictic, existential")[17] function of deictic spatial and temporal adverbs such as "today," "yesterday," "tomorrow," "here," and "there": These adverbs do not refer to a place localized anywhere or at any time in the historical reality of author and reader but

[13] Ibid.: 58f.
[14] Ibid.: 57f.
[15] Let us mention in passing that Hamburger takes only narratives with a specific grammatical form as "fictional," namely third person-narratives. On the reasons for this, at first glance, strange and oft-criticized limitation cf. Scheffel (2003: particularly 143).
[16] See Hamburger (1993: 64ff.); Hamburger uses as evidence a phrase taken from a novel by Alice Berend: "Tomorrow was Christmas" ("Morgen war Weihnachten," ibid.: 72). Here, the preterite and a future-tense adverb are combined in a single sentence.
[17] Ibid.: 132.

rather to the here and now of the characters and thereby to a no-time and a no-where;

– the use of verbs of inner action (verbs of perception, thinking, sensation) in the third person[18].

From the above characteristics, Hamburger deduces a categorical difference between fictional and non-fictional narration. She understands fictional narration as a phenomenon for whose identification these presentation-related characteristics are both necessary and sufficient[19]. For her utterance-related approach, the singular place of fictional narrative in the general system of language connects ultimately two specific qualities:

1. Contrary to sentences in non-fictional narrative, as well as those of literary narratives in first-person, sentences in third-person fictional narratives are distinguished by the absence of a stating subject. In this case, the modification of the temporal system of language, the loss of the deictic function of spatial and temporal adverbs, and the use of verbs of inner processes in the third person forbid to speak of a real or fictitious subject that would state these sentences at a definite time and in a definite place and that would articulate a specific field of experience referring to a concrete person. Consequently, in the case of fictional narrative, there is no "narrator" (in the sense of a fictitious person bound to time and space), but only the "narrating poet and his narrative acts"[20]. Yet "narration" must be understood in a specific sense here since the historical author makes no statements. In other words, to quote Hamburger's formulation: "Between the narrating and the narrated there exists not a subject-object-realation, i.e., a statement structure, but rather a functional correspondence"[21]. Thus, narration appears in this special case as a "function" that produces the narrated, "the narrative function, which the narrative poet manipulates as, for example, the painter wields his colors and brushes"[22].

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[18] Cf. ibid.: 81ff., as well as Hamburger's considerations of the phenomenon of narrated monologue ("erlebte Rede"), ibid.: 84ff.

[19] For pragmatic criticisms of Hamburger's position cf. e.g. Anderegg (1973: 100ff.); Bode (1988: 342f.); Gabriel (1975: 59ff.); Rasch (1961: 68–81) and Weinrich (1964: 21ff.).

[20] Hamburger (1993: 140); with discussion of examples.

[21] Ibid.: 136.

[22] Ibid.

2. The presence of a fictitious "I-Origo" in fictional narratives corresponds to the absence of a definite stating subject. The "I-Origines" are understood as "reference or orientational systems which epistemologically, and hence temporally, have nothing to do with a real I who experiences fiction in any way—in other words with the author or the reader"[23]. The possibility of such fictitious "I-Origines" establishes at the same time the distinctive achievement of fictional narration:

> Epic fiction is the sole instance where third-person figures can be spoken of not, or not only as objects, but also of subjects, where the subjectivity of a third-person figure *qua* that of a third-person can be portrayed[24].

Now if one compares the linguistic particularities which Hamburger determines for the case of fictional narratives with her theoretical premises in *Logik der Dichtung*, it is clear that Hamburger does not fully exhaust the implications of her theory. In fact, she does not delineate entirely the logical consequences of her incisive definition of literary fiction as appearance of reality ("Schein der Wirklichkeit"), in the sense of an imaginary objectivity. Her definition of the relationship between narration and narrated, in the sense of a functional connection, and her observation of the modification of the temporal system of language applies only if we consider the utterances of fictional speech from outside, i.e. from their real context and in their relationship with a historical reality[25]. According to this view, the author of a fictional narrative does not actually narrate something about characters, but rather produces them narratively. Thus, in the case of fictional speech, the preterite does not refer to a historical past.

Fictional speech is, to quote Dieter Janik, communicated communication ("kommunizierte Kommunikation")[26]. As the literary theorist Félix Martínez-Bonati established, we have to distinguish here between a real and an imaginary communicative context. According to the model of fic-

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23 Ibid.: 74.

24 Ibid.: 139. In the wake of Hamburger cf. Cohn (1978).

25 Hamburger thus takes into account what Dorrit Cohn calls "Referenzstufe," cf. Cohn (1990) and (1999). On Cohn's approach and its indebtness to Hamburger cf. in detail Scheffel (2003). For arguments for the differentiability between historical and fictional narration see Dolezel (1997). Franz K. Stanzel attempts to reconcile his dispute with Hamburger about the existence of a fictional narrator, cf. Stanzel (1989: particularly 32).

26 Cf. Janik (1973: 12).

tion developed by Martínez-Bonati[27], the author of a fictional narrative produces sentences that are "real" but "inauthentic"—since they are not to be understood as the thoughts of the author. Simultaneously, the same sentences must be attributed to the fictional narrator as "authentic" sentences that are, however, "imaginary"—since they are conceived by the narrator, but only in the framework of an imaginary communicative situation. Through the real writing of a real author a text emerges whose imaginarily authentic sentences produce an imaginary objectivity that encompasses a fictional communicative situation, a fictional narration, and a fictional narrated story. The fictional narrative is, at the same time, part of a real and of an imaginary communication, and therefore consists both of "real-inauthentic" and of "imaginary-authentic" sentences (that is, imaginary "Wirklichkeitsaussagen" in Hamburger's sense). Given that the word "narrator" is an auxiliary term and does not necessarily designate a definite masculine or feminine person (since, in the framework of fictional narratives, inanimate objects, animals, collective, disembodied, or voices seemingly out of the bounds of time and space also narrate, a look at the stating authority in fictional narration would validate Jean Paul Sartre's incisive formulation: "The author invents, the narrator tells what has happened […]. The author invents the narrator and the style of the narration peculiar to the narrator."[28]

This "disjunctive model"[29] (which, incidentally, also delineates the narratological model developed in our *Einführung in die Erzähltheorie*[30]) leads to the following conclusions:

1. The narrative domains of fictional and non-fictional narrative are to be separated strictly from each other.

2. Narrative fiction encompasses significantly more than Käte Hamburger and many of her adepts formulate. In addition to the frequently referred-to absence of an immediate field of reference, and the possibility of a perspectivization and personalization of the narrated that are to be distinguished as much from the historical author as also from the voice of a fictitious stating authority, fictional narration provides a unique freedom. The position of the speaker as well as that of the listener of narrating

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[27] Cf. Martínez-Bonati (1981) and (1996). For a detailed reconstruction cf. Scheffel (1997: 34–39).
[28] Cf. Sartre (1988: 774).
[29] Cf. Cohn (1990).
[30] Cf. Martínez/Scheffel (2003).

speech can be shaped freely without regard for the "natural" borders of physical and historical space and time.

With respect to our opening question, this means: It is not only legitimate but necessary to draw an unambiguous theoretical distinction between fictional and non-fictional narratives, and to conceive of narrative theory as a genuine discipline within literary studies, as "fictional narratology" focused on the specific aspects of fictional narration. Conversely, only a connection between narratology and theory of fiction can cover the special status of fictional narration, as opposed to non-fictional narration.

## 2.

In our discussion of the concepts of narrative and fictionality so far we have taken for granted the validity of the distinction between fictional and factual texts. We now want to examine this distinction in more detail in order to avoid possible misunderstandings of our argument.

Theories of fictionality—as we have seen in the cases of Käte Hamburger, Dorrit Cohn, and John R. Searle—tend to divide all narratives into two distinct classes, namely fictional and non-fictional (henceforward: "factual") narratives. The first class includes novels, ballads, short stories etc., the second pieces of historiography, autobiography, and journalism. The division is taken to be mutually exclusive: any given narrative is supposed to be either fictional or factual.

Let us have a closer look now at borderline cases in order to test the distinction's validity. We will analyze some examples which we consider to be representative for basic aspects of literary communication like "author/narrator," "story" ("histoire"), "discourse" ("discours"), "reference," and "verification." In the act of understanding individual narratives these aspects are, to be sure, mutually interconnected; if we deal with them now separately one after another it is for analytic reasons only. For each of the aspects just mentioned we will provide examples which at first sight seem to subvert the distinction of fictional vs. factual. We will limit ourselves to examples which approach and, perhaps, blur the borderline from the "factual" side, i.e. narratives which stem from genres or modes of writing which are usually taken to be factual.

(a) Firstly, let us consider an example for literary forgeries. In 1995, the hitherto unknown author Binjamin Wilkomirski published *Bruchstücke. Aus einer Kindheit 1939-1948*. The book relates the cruel infancy of a jewish boy who was forced to live in Maidanek and Auschwitz-

Birkenau. It was received enthusiastically by the German critics. In 1998, however, the swiss journalist Daniel Ganzfried accused Wilkomirski of fraud. According to Ganzfried, Wilkomirski never experienced the Holocaust directly. Instead, he was born under normal circumstances as Bruno Grosjean and raised in Switzerland by the couple Doesseker that adopted him and eventually endowed him with their last name. Although Wilkomirski/Grosjean/Doesseker insists upon the veracity of his memoirs until today, further publications confirmed Ganzfried's accusations. Needless to say, the early success of the book vanished after the disclosure of its true authorship[31].

Do such cases of forged authorship, as some trendy declarations of the death of the author might suggest, infringe the validity of the distinction between fictional and factual texts? Obviously not. If we take it as a faithful account of authentic experiences of the author, *Bruchstücke* belongs to the factual group of autobiographies anyway. Now the discovery of the fraud and hence the recognition that the text is but a pretended memoir do not transform the text into a piece of fictional literature. Faked autobiographies still remain, albeit in a parasitic way, within the realm of factual texts. To pretend to write, like Wilkomirski, an autobiography, and to write a fiction novel, as Daniel Defoe did in *Robinson Crusoe*, in autobiographical form, are two different things. The violent reactions, created from a sense of betrayal, which inevitably arise once a faked autobiography is disclosed as such verify quite clearly that the reading public does distinguish not only between fact and fiction (i.e. factual and fictional discourse) but also between fake and fiction.

(b) Let us consider now some intratextual aspects of narratives. With regard to a narrative's discourse ("discours") some factual genres are sometimes said to subvert the borderline towards fictional texts. Take the case of the New Journalism. In the 1950ies, authors like Tom Wolfe or Gabriel García Márquez began to utilize in their journalistic writings narrative techniques which by then had been conceived of as signposts of fictionality—verbatim representation of dialogues which took place in the journalist's absence and without having been mechanically documented, and, most importantly, devices of internal focalisation like interior monologue, stream of consciousness, and free indirect discourse[32]. In New

[31] See Mächler (2000).
[32] See Wolfe (1973).

Journalism, however, such devices appear in reportages which are meant to provide a factual representation of events which really took place. One of the most prominent examples of this new kind of journalistic writing was Truman Capote's *In Cold Blood* (1965) which told the story of the murder of a Kansas farm familiy by two young men who subsequently were condemned to death and eventually executed. Its subtitle, *A True Account of a Multiple Murder and Its Consequences*, indicates the undiminished claim for truth which is essential to the proper understanding of such pieces of narrative. In spite of the utilization of devices of internal focalization etc., Capote aspired to tell the truth about the consciousness of the murderers. His justification for the veracity of the thoughts and feelings he attributed to the persons portrayed in his book is based on the informations he gathered in the years of research he invested into this murder case. Even though he could not possibly have direct access to the consciousness (or even to subconscious realms) of the persons involved (which only a god would have), he could make his depiction highly probable by the hundreds of interviews he made when studying this case. In order to check if a given narrative should be taken as factual, we only need to examine whether it would make sense to accuse the text of being mendacious or not in case it depicted state of affairs and events which were incompatible with independent trustworthy informations. In texts like *In Cold Blood*, its "fictional" discoursive devices notwithstanding, a truth claim is obviously maintained. Thus we must conceive of such texts as factual narratives. Their factual essence, by the way, would not change if we would discover that some statements or implications conveyed in the text were incompatible with our knowledge of the events depicted. Indeed, Capote has been called on some misleading assumptions he stated in *In Cold Blood*[33]. In such cases, however, the text should be considered as a (partially) erroneous factual text rather than a fictional text. For poets, as Sir Philip Sidney put it some centuries ago, cannot lie because they don't affirm anything[34].

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[33] See Hollowell (1977).

[34] "[...] the Poet, he nothing affirms, and therefore never lieth. For, as I take it, to lie, is to affirme that to be true, which is false. So as the other artists, and especially the historian, affirming many things, can, in the cloudy knowledge of mankind, hardly escape from many lies. But the Poet (as I said before) never affirmeth [...]," Sidney (1974: 52f.).

Let us mention in passing that, in historiography, such seemingly 'fictional' devices have always been used without damaging its truth claim. To provide an example from Classical Antiquity: in a well known passage at the beginning of his *History of the Peloponnesian War*, Thucydides justifies his verbatim report of speeches in terms of probability:

> The speeches are reproduced here according to the way how anybody under the described circumstances by necessity would have to speak, saving as much as possible of the essence of the things actually said (part I, chap. 22).

Although the verbatim report of speeches, taken literally, presupposes the superhuman memory of an omniscient narrator—as much as, when presenting forms of internal focalization like interior monologue, a superhuman access to the consciousness of others is presupposed—Thucydides nevertheless maintains his intention to give a factual account of the events which took place during the Peloponnesian war.

To sum up, the utilization of devices which used to be (and sometimes still are) taken to be specific to fictional discourse which we find, e.g., in the New Journalism, does not alter the truth claim of such texts and hence its essentially factual status.

(c) Let us turn to the aspect of content, i.e. the "story" ("histoire") of narratives. Are there borderline cases of factual narration, with regard to the immanent character of the events depicted, which would subvert the division between factual and fictional narratives? A case in point one might think of is historiographical writing. Since the 1970ies, Hayden White and others declare the inescapable "literariness" of historiographical writing and hence the untenability of a strict distinction between factual and fictional narratives. To substantiate this claim, White, in his influential monograph *Metahistory* and numerous subsequent publications, above all refers to forms of "emplotment" of the events depicted in the writing of history. "Emplotment," White explains, "is the way by which a sequence of events fashioned into a story is gradually revealed to be a story of a particular kind"[35]. He proposes four basic "modes of emplotment" borrowed from the literary critic Northrop Frye's *Anatomy of Criticism* (1957), namely Romance, Tragedy, Comedy, and Satire. In his writings White tends to assimilate the structures of emplotment in historiography and fiction to such an extent that differences between these two

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[35] White (1973: 7). See also his essays "The Historical Text as Literary Artifact" and "The Fictions of Factual Representation" in White (1978: 81–100, 121–34).

kinds of narratives are hardly recognizable anymore. His insights concerning the narrative structures used in historiography, however, do not allow for the conclusion that history writing is necessarily "literary" in the sense of ficticious. Instead, what White discovers in the writings of historians are structures which function quite independently of whether the text in question be factual or fictional. Of course any narrative possesses structural qualities and is, in this sense, "constructed". But its necessarily constructive character in no way precludes the possibility of fulfilling a referential function. Plot structure and reference are two different aspects of narratives which are compatible with each other.

(d) Having discussed the two intratextual aspects discourse and story, we now turn again to an extratextual aspect, namely reference. The crucial signpost of factual narration is its reference to reality. Some years ago, Dorrit Cohn maintained for the case of historiography:

> [...] the idea that history is commited to verifiable documentation and that this commitment is suspended in fiction has survived even the most radical dismantling of the history/fiction distinction. In historiography the notion of referentiality […] can, and indeed must, continue to inform the work of practicioners who have become aware of the problematics of narrative construction[36].

As well is known, Cohn's pièce de résistance for the definition of factual narratives, namely its reference to reality, has encountered time and again severe criticism. Recently, widespread discussions about the apparently simulated nature of today's "hyper-reality" seem to prohibit any recourse to reference as distinctive quality of factual texts in contrast to fictional ones. We cannot engage in this far-reaching discussion here. But let us at least consider one case in point.

"Borderline Journalism" is the name for a disputed kind of journalism that became widely known in German speaking countries and elsewhere only recently. Between 1995 and 1999, the swiss journalist Tom Kummer published a number of interviews with Hollywood celebrities like Pamela Anderson, Kim Basinger, George Clooney, Brad Pitt, and Sharon Stone in renowned German journals and newspapers including the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*[37]. In the year 2000, however, Kummer was accused of fraud. It was disclosed to the public that many interviews had been written by Kummer without ever meeting the stars, partly drawing from a number of

[36] Cohn (1990: 779).
[37] See Reus (2002).

different sources already published by others elsewhere, partly made up by Kummer himself. Now the interesting point in this case is not the fraud as such but the way how Kummer defended his procedure. He rejected the allegations declaring that, in his interviews, he never meant to present a verbatim report of actual conversations with individual stars. Instead he intended to perform a "borderline-journalism" in order to produce an "implosion of reality." Apparently Kummer referred to Jean Baudrillard's theory about an inescapable media-induced hyper-reality[38]. Now whatever the plausibility of such theories which postulate the disappearance of old-fashioned reality in contemporary culture may be: the unanimously hostile reaction of the public and of fellow journalists following the disclosure of the interviews's true nature clearly indicates that a strong feeling with regard to the crucial difference between factual and faked texts exists. Any further collaboration with Kummer was cancelled by the newspapers and journals he used to work for. Moreover, the two directors of the "Magazin" of the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* responsible for the publication of Kummer's texts eventually were fired. Again, as in the other cases analyzed above, it did make a difference whether these interviews which were taken by the readers to be factual did indeed refer to real conversations or not.

(e) A final aspect, to be distinguished from the aspect of reference discussed above, concerns a pragmatic aspect of story-telling, namely the provableness of the story's truth claim. A case in point are urban legends. Such narratives, extremely popular nowadays, relate stories about vanished hitchhikers who turn up dead, venomous spiders hidden in inconspicuous yucca palms, or sexual encounters with strangers leading to infection with HIV. Urban legends are situated in the everyday world. They deal with the things we like to eat and drink, with relatives and friends, with our pets and cars; they occur at places where we live and where we go on holiday to, at the schools and universities we work at; they are connected with the activities which we earn our living by; they happen to people like you and me. Now urban legends fluctuate between factual account and mere fiction. At first sight, they seem to be true representations of unique experiences; they are told as if they were truthful accounts of something that really happened. In most cases, however, they can be shown to be variants of widespread legends. In order to clarify this

[38] Kummer (2000: 110). See Baudrillard (1981).

ambiguity let us have a closer look at how urban legends are being communicated[39]. The narration typically begins with a claim for credibility. The narrator informs the listener that he has heard the story from a friend of his who has a friend who experienced the story personally. Hence the story's truth-claim is established by reference to a witness of the events. This witness, however, is never present at the moment when the urban legend is told. The proof of the story's truth remains, so to speak, always two or three instances away. This initial assertion of truthfulness is such an essential feature of urban legends that they have been called "foaf-tales," with "foaf" standing for "friend of a friend." Thus, when conveyed in face-to-face-communication, urban legends have to be understood as factual narratives. Their specific feature in this respect, however, consists in their permanent deferral of provableness. It is not necessary for an urban legend, in order to be effective, that its truth be proven. These narratives belong to the realm of unproven certainties we live by. They are, one might say, not true yet certain.

In the latter half of our paper we have analyzed some examples of factual narratives which, with regard to essential textual and pragmatic aspects of narratives, seem at first sight to subvert the distinction between fictional and factual narratives. Our analysis has shown, however, that far from abandoning the referential function they adhere to a truth-claim that separates them quite clearly from fictional forms of narrative. We arrive to the conclusion that, contrary to some trendy commonplaces in recent cultural criticism, the distinction remains basically valid also with regard to such borderliners. Fictional narratives possess specific features which separate them from factual narratives. Therefore, an appropriate analysis of fictional narratives requires not only a (general) theory of narration but also a theory of fictionality. The phenomenon of fictionality is complex because it involves different aspects of narrative and its communication. Hence also the borderline between factual and fictional narratives should be conceived of as a bundle of different aspects each of which can be foregrounded in a specific manner by narrative texts. Therefore we must distinguish between different ways of transgressions of the borderline between fictional and factual narratives with respect to a narrative's author/narrator, discourse, content, reference, and provableness.

[39] See Bennett (1996).

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# Narratology or Narratologies? Taking Stock of Recent Developments, Critique and Modest Proposals for Future Usages of the Term

## 1. Introduction: On the Renaissance of Narratology and the Proliferation of New Approaches[1]

During the last decade or so the study of narrative has become so diversified and extensive that it is probably no exaggeration to say that there has been a "renaissance in narrative theory and analysis" (Richardson 2000b: 168). Given the plethora and diversity of new approaches and departures in the burgeoning field of narrative theory and analysis, it may be debatable, however, whether it is equally justified to speak of a renaissance of

[1] The present paper is partly based on a revised and updated version of an article which first appeared in the *Proceedings of the Conference of the German Association of University Teachers of English: Volume XXI*; see A. Nünning (2000a); the bibliography has also been updated, though limitations on space precluded the possibility of adding more than about two dozen of the many narratological books and articles which have appeared since 1999. I should like to thank Dorrit Cohn, Monika Fludernik, Herbert Grabes, Manfred Jahn, Dieter Janik, Jan Christoph Meister, Hans-Harald Müller, Wolfgang G. Müller, John Pier, Gerald Prince, Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan, Jürgen Schlaeger, Wolf Schmid, Jörg Schönert, and Werner Wolf for their stimulating comments and valuable suggestions. Many thanks to my assistants Klaudia Seibel, from whose capacities as a computer wizard the models originate, Hanne Birk, and Rose Lawson for their careful proof-reading. The members of my research group on cultural and historical narratology, with whom I have had the pleasure to discuss many of the issues addressed in this paper, have been a source of constant inspiration and motivation.

narratology at this juncture (cf. Herman 1999b: 2). It is arguably an open question whether all or even most of the new approaches have all that much in common with the systematic study of narrative known as 'narratology,' which has been defined as the 'science of narrative' (Todorov).

Leaving terminological issues aside for a moment, narrative theory and narratology have certainly benefited from a number of far-reaching developments in literary and cultural theory: from the crisis and bankruptcy of poststructuralism, from the reception of Hayden White's highly influential writings, from "the return to history" (Currie 1998: 76), from what the historian Lawrence Stone (1979) has called "the Revival of Narrative" (cf. Burke 1991), and from the renewed interest in story-telling, both as an object of study and as a mode of scholarly writing. Moreover, a number of wide-ranging changes or 'turns' in literary and cultural theory have been conducive to fostering interest in both narratology and the cultural and historical significance of narratives. These complex changes in the theoretical and critical climate, which have been dubbed 'cultural turn' (Schmidt, Voßkamp), 'historical turn' (Fluck), 'anthropological turn' (Schlaeger), 'ethical turn,' 'moral turn,' and 'narrativist' or 'narrative turn,'[2] have greatly increased interest in what Bruner (1991) has called "The Narrative Construction of Reality." While the mere systematic and formalist analysis of narrative, which was once the central point of narratology, is no longer the main focus, narrative theorists have begun to turn their attention to "cultural analysis" (Bal 1999), putting their analytic toolkits "to the service of other concerns considered more vital for cultural studies," as Mieke Bal (1990: 729) put it in an article tellingly entitled "The Point of Narratology."

The recent proliferation of new approaches in narrative theory and analysis raises the question of whether or not one should still refer to these new approaches as 'narratology,' many of which arguably represent other forms of narrative theory, analysis or application of quite different theoretical schools to the study of particular narratives. This paper's point of departure is the fact that the term narratology is currently used in (at least) two quite different senses. Whereas some theorists use it "quite broadly, in a way that makes it more or less interchangeable with *narrative studies*" (Herman 1999b: 27), others define 'narratology' in a very

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[2] Cf. Kreiswirth (1995) and Isernhagen (1999: 176f., 180); cf. also Hayden White's influential work and the so-called "narrativist school of historiography."

narrow sense as “that branch of narrative theory that developed in the sixties and early seventies, mainly in France, largely under the aegis of structuralism and its formalist progenitor” (Rimmon-Kenan 1989: 157).

The paper pursues three goals: to highlight the differences that distinguish the ‘new narratologies’ from the structuralist paradigm within which ‘classical narratology’ operated, to give an overview of recent developments in narratology, and to provide both a critique of the inflationary use of the term ‘narratology’ and some modest proposals for its future usage. After these brief prolegomena, the second part of the paper will briefly summarize the main differences and tensions between ‘classical narratology’ and what David Herman (1999b: 9, 14) has called ‘postclassical narratology.’ The third section provides an overview over recent developments in postclassical narratology, attempting to map the various new approaches. The fourth part will be devoted to a brief critique of the current proliferation of the term ‘narratology’, providing both modest proposals for its future usage and a provisional map of the relations between some of the key terms like narrative studies, narrative theory, narratology, and narratological criticism.

## 2. Narratology vs. Narratologies: Differences and Tensions

In his brilliant monograph *Constructing Postmodernism*, Brian McHale (1992: 4) makes an observation that provides an ideal starting-point, or excuse, for anyone who intends to refrain from telling ‘the’ story of narratology, being convinced that any such attempt is doomed to failure: “Lately the tables have turned, and instead of narrative being the object of narratological theory, it is theory that has become the object of narrative: where once we had theories about narrative, we now begin to have stories about theory.” One of the reasons why I am reluctant to provide another story about narratology is that the history of narrative theory arguably contradicts the critical master narratives that have so far been offered.[3] Moreover, any given story about narratology would just trace one “of the

[3] Cf. Herman (1999b: 2f.); Nünning (2000a); Richardson (2000b: 170f.), who critically reviews “The Narratives of Narrative Theory” (170), and Bialostosky (1989: 167): “‘What’s the story?’ we might ask. Is ‘narratology’ the hero of a triumphant development, a diminished thing, or a comic character with outsized pretensions? Is narratology a converging concern of many important disciplines or a rare throwback to outmoded referential theories of literature?”

countless possible plots" in a field that has recently turned into "a garden of forking paths" (Onega/Landa 1996b: 36):

> The actual evolution and development of narrative theory cannot begin to be grafted onto the master narrative of critical theory as told by the poststructuralists. Indeed, the story of modern narrative theory does not fit well into the frame of any narrative history. There are far too many story strands, loose ends, abrupt turns, and unmotivated reappearances of forgotten figures and theoretical approaches to fit easily within any one narrative structure. The history of modern narrative theory is more accurately depicted as a cluster of contiguous histories rather than a single, comprehensive narrative. (Richardson 2000b: 172)

Instead of telling one particular story about narratology[4], this article attempts to reassess recent developments in the field by providing a preliminary synchronous map of the plethora of new theoretical approaches that have emerged. The recent "explosion of activity in the field of narrative studies" (Herman 1999b: 1) has resulted in such a proliferation of new approaches in the field of narrative studies and narrative theory that narratology seems to have "ramified into *narratologies*," as Herman (1999b: 1) observes: "structuralist theorizing about stories has evolved into a plurality of models for narrative analysis" (ibid.). Given the plethora of new narratological approaches, it indeed no longer seems appropriate to talk about narratology as though it were a single approach or a monolithic discipline. As the programmatic use of the plural—*Narratologies*—in the title of a particularly inspiring collection of essays recently edited by David Herman (1999a) indicates, there is no longer one capital-"N" narratology. What once looked like a more or less unified structuralist enterprise has branched out into different directions and fields, producing a great diversity of new approaches, many of which display little if any family resemblance to their formalist great-grandfather.[5]

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4 For a particularly well-informed and perspicacious brief history of theories of the novel (*Romantheorie*), narrative theory (*Erzähltheorie*), and narratology in Germany, see the illuminating article by Anja Cornils and Wilhelm Schernus in this volume. One can at least hope that their paper, to which the present article is indebted, will have whetted (at least some) narratologists' appetite for more precise and theoretically ambitious accounts of the history of modern narrative theory and will encourage more detailed studies of both the history and international ramifications of narratology.

5 For the use of the plural, cf. Herman (1999a), (1999b); Currie (1998: 96), who vaguely refers to "the new narratologies," and Fludernik (2000a). For short, but excellent overviews of the various new directions in "postclassical narratology," readers are referred to Herman (1999b); Fludernik (2000a) and Richardson (2000b).

Each of them moves, in its own way, from a description of textual phenomena to broader cultural questions, various contexts and a growing concern with processes rather than products.

According to Herman (1999b: 8), the differences between structuralist narratology and the new narratologies, which he calls 'postclassical,' "point to a broader reconfiguration of the narratological landscape. The root transformation can be described as a shift from text-centered and formal models to models that are jointly formal and functional—models attentive both to the text and to the context of stories." Herman (1999b: 16) has also identified another "hallmark of postclassical narratology," viz. "its abiding concern with the process and not merely the product of narratological inquiry; stories are not just preexistent structures, waiting to be found by the disinterested observer; rather, properties of the object being investigated, narrative, are relativized across frameworks of investigation, which must themselves be included in the domain under study."

In order to highlight the differences that distinguish the so-called new or postclassical narratologies from the structuralist paradigm within which 'narratology proper' operated, figure 1 provides an overview over their main features. Differences in methodology and general orientation notwithstanding, there are arguably a number of identifiable features that constitute the lowest common denominators. Considering the various facets of the new narratologies, the following model foregrounds those which bear directly on what sets the new 'postclassical' narratologies off from the structuralist paradigm of 'classical' narratology.

| Structuralist ('classical') Narratology | New ('postclassical') Narratologies |
| --- | --- |
| text-centered | context-oriented |
| narrative (narrative *langue*) as main object of study | narratives (narrative *parole*) as main object of study |
| main focus on closed systems and static products | main focus on open and dynamic processes |
| 'features,' 'properties' of a text as main object of study | the dynamics of the reading process (reading strategies, interpretive choices, preference rules) as main object of study |
| bottom-up analyses | top-down syntheses |
| preference for (reductive) binarisms and graded scales | preference for holistic cultural interpretation and 'thick descriptions' |

| | |
|---|---|
| emphasis on theory, formalist description, and taxonomy of narrative techniques | on application, thematic readings, and ideologically-charged evaluations |
| evasion of moral issues and the production of meaning | focus on ethical issues and the dialogic negotiation of meanings |
| establishing a grammar of narrative and a poetics of fiction | putting the analytic toolbox to interpretative use as main goals |
| formalist and descriptivist paradigm | interpretative and evaluative paradigm |
| ahistorical and synchronous | historical and diachronous in orientation |
| focus on universalist features of all narratives | focus on particular form and effects of individual narratives |
| a (relatively) unified (sub)discipline | an interdisciplinary project consisting of heterogeneous approaches |

Figure 1: Main features of structuralist ('classical') narratology vs. new ('postclassical') narratologies

At the risk of gross oversimplification, one can try to provide a rough sketch of the parallels of concern that (at least most of) the so-called new narratologies share. Although the dichotomous form of the matrix suggests unwarranted assumptions of homogeneity, and does not do justice to the diversity, scope, and complexity of the different approaches subsumed under the wide umbrellas of the terms 'classical' and 'postclassical' narratologies, it may serve to highlight some of the innovative trends that have recently emerged.

First, the development of narratology has followed a course away from the identification and systematization of the 'properties' of narrative texts in the direction of a growing awareness of the complex interplay that exists between both texts and their cultural contexts and between textual features and the interpretive choices and strategies involved in the reading process. Second, classical narratology's preference for describing textual features within a structuralist and formalist paradigm has given way to a general "move toward integration and synthesis" (Herman 1999b: 11) and towards 'thicker descriptions,' to adapt Clifford Geertz's well-known metaphor. Third, while structuralist narratology was a more or less unified discipline which was interested mainly in the synchronic dimension of the poetics of narrative, evading both moral issues and the production of meaning (cf. Ginsburg/Rimmon-Kenan 1999: 71), most of the new approaches that have been subsumed under the wide umbrella of the term 'postclassical narratologies' represent interdisciplinary projects which display a keen interest in the changing forms and functions of a wide

range of narratives and in the dialogic negotiation of meanings. Fourth, postclassical narratology tends to focus on issues like context, culture, gender, history, interpretation, and the reading process, highlighting those aspects of narrative bracketed by structuralist narratology. Moreover, as far as methodological advances are concerned, Manfred Jahn lucidly summarizes the major changes as follows:

> where classical narratology preferred an ahistorical/panchronic vantage, postclassical narratology today actively pursues historical/diachronic lines of inquiry; where many first-generation narratologists insisted on an elementarist (or analytic, or combinatorial, or 'bottom-up') approach […] postclassical narratology today welcomes the uses of synthetic and integrative view […]; and, finally, where classical narratology assumed a […] retrospective stance, there is an increasing tendency today to pick up the thread of Sternberg's and Perry's explorations into the cognitive dynamics of the reading process. (Jahn 1999: 169)

Despite the fact that the dichotomies represented in figure 1 emphasize the contrasts between structuralist narratology and the new 'postclassical' approaches, I should like to argue that these dichotomies should not be exaggerated. They arguably present us with a set of false choices, between text and context, between form and content, between formalism and contextualism, between bottom-up analysis and top-down synthesis, and between 'neutral' description and 'ideological' interpretation or evaluation. The problem with such binarisms is not so much the ingrained structuralist fear that the formalist and descriptivist paradigm will inevitably be polluted by the invasion of ideological concerns, as the failure of such rigid distinctions to do justice to the aims and complexities of narrative theory. As Wolf Schmid's article in the present volume emphasizes time and again, even such a basic concept as the event is inevitably subject to interpretation[6] And what is true of basic concepts becomes even more problematic once we turn our attention to complex concepts like the unreliable narrator, definitions or discussions of which tend to be situated at the interface between aesthetics and ethics, poetics and moral values.

Moreover, another reason why the dichotomous form of the matrix is questionable is the fact that there arguably never was 'one' Narratology in the first place. What we are actually faced with, even in the heyday of structuralism, is not one and only one form of narratology, but rather a

[6] Cf. Schmid's article in the present volume, and Herman (1999b: 12): "*no* description is devoid of interpretation."

broad range of different ways of defining and conceptualising narrative. Though from today's vantage-point it may look as though what may for convenience sake be called 'classical narratology' was once a more or less unified enterprise, narratology was arguably never a monolithic discipline. As the following diagram (see figure 2) tries to show, at least four main variants of structuralist ('classical') narratology can be distinguished.[7] In addition to the two well-known domains of structuralist narratology, i.e. story-oriented narratology and discourse-oriented narratology, even classical narratology featured two other branches, viz. narrative semantics and rhetorical or pragmatic narratology.

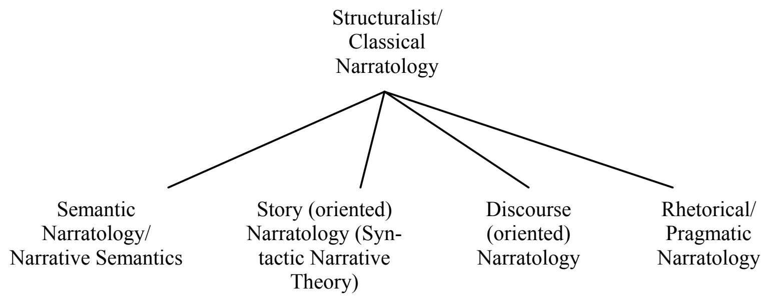



Figure 2: Main variants of structuralist ('classical') narratology

## 3. Mapping Models and Approaches: Taking Stock of Recent Developments in Narratology and Narratologies

In comparison to the main variants of structuralist or 'classical' narratology, which share key theoretical and methodological assumptions, the proliferation of new kinds of approaches in 'postclassical narratology' testifies to the erosion of any structuralist consensus. Given the plethora of new directions and approaches in narrative theory, the sheer number of which might make one rub one's eyes in astonishment, it definitely looks as though narratology has not only survived the challenges of poststructuralism, feminism, the New Historicism, and postcolonialism, but has

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[7] For a much more detailed account, see Prince (1995a, 1995b) as well as Prince's survey article in the present volume.

also developed in a number of interesting new directions. As Herman (1999b: 14ff.) has shown in his overview of new "Directions in Postclassical Narratology," there has not only been a proliferation of new approaches, however, the field of narrative theory has also undergone a number of sea changes which have ushered in new phases in the study of narrative.

Narratologists have obviously begun to heed the Old Testament, since they have been tremendously fruitful, and multiplied: Whether they have actually replenished the earth may be debatable, but there are currently more self-styled narratologies under the sun than ever before. With regard to some of these interdisciplinary marriages, one cannot quite help feeling that they are misalliances, and in some cases the partners involved certainly make strange bed-fellows. Being denounced as arid formalists, desperate narratologists have obviously not been very particular about choosing new mates, as testified by the names of some of the new critical subdisciplines. Narratologies' recent bunch of offspring includes a wide range of approaches, many of which at first glance look like curious hybrids.

Leaving aside for the moment the question of whether the various new directions in narrative studies should actually be designated 'narratologies,' I have tried to provide a provisional classification of the different kinds of new approaches in the form of a model or map. For convenience sake and in order to pay due tribute to the narratologist's irresistible urge to systematize whatever object he or she happens to be dealing with, I have arranged them in eight groups (figure 3).[8] Four things need to be emphasized, however, so as to remove possible sources of misunderstanding. Though it may go without saying, the tradition established by 'classical narratology' of refining analytic concepts and applying them to the close scrutiny of texts is continued by such eminent scholars as Dorrit

[8] The following model is indebted to the illuminating surveys provided by Ryan/van Alphen (1993); Herman (1999b); Martínez/Scheffel (1999); and Fludernik (1998), 2000a), who distinguishes between "four new schools of narratology," (87) viz. Possible Worlds Theory, Thematic Narratology, Linguistic-Applicational Narratology, and Post-Structuralist Narratology, and who provides concise characterizations of the new approaches she identifies. The term 'linguistic-applicational narratology' is not only a very broad and somewhat questionable category, but it also strikes me as being a misnomer, because not all of the approaches and studies which Fludernik subsumes under it have been greatly influenced by the linguistic paradigm.

Cohn, Seymour Chatman, Gérard Genette, Gerald Prince, James Phelan, Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan, and Franz Stanzel.[9] Second, there are no clear-cut boundaries either between the groups or between approaches subsumed under one more or less artificial umbrella. Third, some of the narratologies listed below represent mixed bags rather than clear-cut approaches. Fourth, the list does not, of course, pretend to offer an exhaustive description or complete overview, neither as far as the approaches nor as far as the practitioners listed below are concerned, focussing instead on a broad range of innovative trends which bear directly on the topic at issue.

Though I am aware of the many pitfalls of pigeonholing, figure 3[10] tries to illustrate what has resulted from what Barry (1990) aptly called "Narratology's Centrifugal Force." Being a (more or less clumsy) attempt at descriptively mapping the proliferation of new approaches[11], the model presents a selective and schematic survey of the most important new directions in both postclassical narratology and its applications as well as of the names of some of their major proponents or practitioners of the re-

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9 Cf. e.g. Cohn (1990), (1995), (1999); Chatman (1990), (1993); Genette (1990), [1991](1993); Prince (1992), (1995a), (1999); Phelan (1996); Phelan/Rabinowitz (1994); Phelan/Martin (1999); and Rimmon-Kenan (1996); cf. also Ryan/van Alphen (1993: 112f.) and Fludernik (2000a: 88f).

10 I present the latest version of this highly simplified and reductive matrix, which I have been tinkering with for more than four years, with utmost trepidation, being fully aware of the hazards of alienating many a narratologist and of being accused of having either put the wrong label on someone's work or put someone in the wrong pigeonhole, the more so since many scholars' works are very difficult to categorize. For an earlier version of a map of new developments and approaches in narrative studies, see Nünning (2000a).

11 For a somewhat similar classification, see Fludernik/Richardson (2000), who divide recent work on narrative, by approach or emphasis, into ten groups: Structuralist and Linguistic Approaches; Rhetorical, Bakhtinian, and Phenomenological Accounts; New Interdisciplinary Approaches; Postmodern Narratology; Ideological Approaches; Psychological Approaches; Poststructuralist Approaches; Popular Culture; Asian Poetics; Important Anthologies. In my opinion, the 'groups' designated as 'Structuralist and Linguistic Approaches' and 'Rhetorical, Bakhtinian, and Phenomenological Accounts' would deserve further subdivision, being much too heterogeneous to warrant calling the work subsumed under that all too wide an umbrella a 'group' in the first place, whereas 'Postmodern Narratology' and 'Poststructuralist Approaches' arguably share so many features that one might well lump them together. The last three 'groups' arguably do not really fit in very well with the other seven, because they are not really 'approaches' at all.

spective trends.[12] While some of the approaches mentioned in the list have been fully elaborated (e.g. Fludernik's ambitious project of a 'natural' narratology) or have already produced a significant body of scholarly work (e.g. feminist narratology), the labels of some of the other narratologies are merely the result of *ad hoc* coinages. Approaches that belong to the latter category are put in quotation marks, with the name of those who have coined or used the respective phrase in parentheses, whereas new narratologies that are fairly well-established by now are printed in bold face. In some cases I have used single inverted commas in order to indicate that the labels I have used are merely provisional.

**1. Contextualist, Thematic, and Ideological Approaches: Applications of Narratology in Literary Studies**

"Contextualist Narratology" (Seymour Chatman)
"Narratology and Thematics" (Ian MacKenzie)
"Comparative Narratology" (Susana Onega/José Ángel García Landa)
"Applied Narratology" (Onega/Landa, Monika Fludernik)
'Marxist Narratology' – Fredric Jameson, John Bender
**Feminist Narratology** – Mieke Bal, Alison Booth, Alison Case, Susan Lanser, Kathy Mezei, Robyn Warhol; Gaby Allrath, Andrea Gutenberg, Marion Gymnich
'Lesbian and Queer Narratology' – Marilyn Farwell, Judith Roof, Susan Lanser
'Ethnic Narratology' – Laura Doyle
"Corporeal Narratology" (Daniel Punday)
'Postcolonial Applications of Narratology' – Monika Fludernik, Marion Gymnich, Roy Sommer
"Socio-Narratology" (Mark Currie)
"New Historical Narratologies" (Mark Currie) – Nancy Armstrong, John Bender, Susan Suleiman
"Cultural and Historical Narratology" (Ansgar Nünning) – Monika Fludernik, Ansgar Nünning, Carola Surkamp, Bruno Zerweck

[12] For informative overviews of the state of the art in narratology, or the various narratologies, for that matter, see Bal (1990), (1999); Barry (1990); Fludernik (1993), (1998), (2000a); Herman (1999a), (1999b); Jahn [1995] (1998); Jahn/Nünning (1994); Martin (1986); Martínez/Scheffel (1999); Nünning (1997), (2000a); Onega/Landa (1996b); Prince (1995b); Ryan/van Alphen (1993) and the special issues of *Poetics Today* edited by McHale/Ronen (1990a), (1990b) and of *GRAAT: Publications des Groupes de Recherches Anglo-Americaines de Tours* edited by Pier (1999). For an interesting attempt at narrativizing the competition between various theories of narrative, see Robbins (1992).

'Diachronic Narratology'/Applications of Narratology to the Rewriting of Literary History – Monika Fludernik, Ansgar Nünning, Christoph Reinfandt, Werner Wolf, Bruno Zerweck
Applications of Narratology to Postmodern Literature – Ursula Heise, Brian McHale, Ansgar Nünning, Werner Wolf, Bruno Zerweck

**2. Transgeneric and Transmedial Applications and Elaborations of Narratology**
Narratology and Genre Theory – Seymour Chatman, Monika Fludernik
Narratology and/of Drama – Brian Richardson, Manfred Jahn, Helmut Bonheim
Narratology and/of Poetry – Peter Hühn, Jörg Schönert, Eva Müller-Zettelmann
Narratology and/of Film Studies – David Bordwell, Edward Branigan, Seymour Chatman, Eckart Voigts-Virchow
Narratology and/of the Musicalization of Fiction – Werner Wolf
Narratology and/of the Visual Arts – Mieke Bal, Franziska Mosthaf, Werner Wolf

**3. Pragmatic and Rhetorical Kinds of Narratology**
'Pragmatic Narratology' – Mary Louise Pratt, Susan Lanser, Michael Kearns, Roger D. Sell, Sven Strasen
'Ethical and Rhetorical Narratology' – Wayne C. Booth, James Phelan, Peter Rabinowitz

**4. Cognitive and Reception–theory–oriented Kinds of ('Meta'-) Narratology**
"Critical Narratology" (Ann Fehn, Ingeborg Hoesterey, Maria Tatar)
'Psychoanalytic Narrative Theories' – Peter Brooks, Ross Chambers, Marianne Hirsch
'Reception-oriented Narrative Theories' – Wolfgang Iser, Werner Wolf
"Constructivist Narratology" (Ansgar Nünning) – Monika Fludernik, Manfred Jahn
**Cognitive Narratology** – Jonathan Culler, Monika Fludernik, Herbert Grabes, Manfred Jahn, Menakhem Perry, Meir Sternberg, Ralf Schneider, Bruno Zerweck
**'Natural' Narratology** – Monika Fludernik

**5. Postmodern and Poststructuralist Deconstructions of (classical) Narratology**
"Postmodern Narratology" – Andrew Gibson, Cynthia Chase, Mark Currie, Patrick O'Neill
"Poststructuralist Narratology" (Marcel Cornis-Pope) – Christine Brooke-Rose, J. Hillis Miller, Andrew Gibson, Eyal Amiran
"Dynamic Narratology" (Eyal Amiran)

**6. Linguistic Approaches/Contributions to Narratology**
Linguistics, Stylistics and Narratology – Richard Aczel, Monika Fludernik, David Herman, Reingard Nischik, Wolfgang Müller, Mary Louise Pratt, Michael Toolan
Sociolinguistics, Discourse Analysis and Narratology – William Labov, Joshua Waletzky, Uta Quasthoff, David Herman ("Socionarratology")
Speech-act Theory and Narratology – Mary Louise Pratt, Michael Kearns, Roger D. Sell

**7. Philosophical Narrative Theories**
**Possible Worlds Theory** – Lubomír Dolezel, Gregory Currie, Uri Margolin, Thomas Pavel, Ruth Ronen, Marie-Laure Ryan; Andrea Gutenberg, Carola Surkamp

Narratology and Theories of Fictionality – Dorrit Cohn, Lubomír Dolezel, Gérard Genette, Félix Martinez-Bonati
'Phenomenological Narrative Theory' – Wolfgang Iser, Paul Ricœur

**8. Other interdisciplinary Narrative Theories**
Artificial Intelligence & Narrative Theory – Marie-Laure Ryan ("Cyberage Narratology"), David Herman, Manfred Jahn
Anthropology & Narrative Theory – Victor Turner, James Clifford, Clifford Geertz
Cognitive Psychology, Cognitive Science & Narrative Theory – Jerome Bruner, Peter Dixon/Marisa Bortolussi ("Psychonarratology"), David Herman, Manfred Jahn, Jürgen Straub
Oral History & Narrative Theory – Mary Chamberlain, Paul Thompson
Theory of Historiography & Narrative Theory – Arthur Danto, Lionel Gossman, Dominick LaCapra, Paul Ricœur, Hayden White; Robert F. Berkhofer, Philippe Carrard, Ann Rigney; Dorrit Cohn, Gérard Genette
Systems Theory & Narrative Theory – Itamar Even-Zohar, Christoph Reinfandt

Figure 3: A selective survey of new developments and approaches in narrative studies and of some of their major proponents

Most of the approaches listed under the heading *Contextualist, Thematic, and Ideological Approaches: Applications of Narratology in Literary Studies* are not really 'narratologies' in that they are merely applications of narratological models and categories to specific texts, genres, or periods. With the possible exception of feminist narratology, which has arguably contributed genuinely narratological insights[13], shedding new light on "narrative qua narrative" (Prince 1995a: 79), most of the contextualist, thematic, and ideological approaches have been concerned with issues that are not really germane to narratology. I should therefore like to suggest that mere applications should be distinguished from 'narratology proper,' without hastening to add, of course, that this distinction between narratology and 'narratological criticism' is meant to be entirely value-free and neutral and that it does not constitute a binary opposition but rather a gliding scale between the poles of 'narratology proper' and 'applications of narratology' or 'narratological criticism.'

Whether or not the same distinction applies to the second group, provisionally dubbed *Transgeneric and Transmedial Applications and Elaborations of Narratology*, remains to be seen. I would venture the hypothesis that taking the media of manifestation of narrative and their different semiotic and expressive possibilities into account will exceed mere

[13] For balanced accounts, see Prince (1995a), (1996). For overviews of feminist narratology, see Lanser (1992), (1995), (1999); Allrath (2000) and Nünning (1994).

application and that it may well lead to a significant rethinking of the domain and concepts of narratology. The as yet undertheorized and unwritten narratologies of drama, poetry, and visual narratives will not only test the validity and rigor of previously developed narratological models and categories, but may well affect the models produced by narratology, resulting not just in terminological modifications and elaborations, but in a revised or extended transgeneric and/or transmedial narratology[14].

Groups number three and four, provisionally entitled *Pragmatic and Rhetorical Narratology* and *Cognitive and Reception-theory-oriented ('Meta'-)Narratologies*, respectively, have shifted attention from the text to both the interplay between text and reader and the dynamics of the reading process. The approaches listed under these headings have resulted from fruitful encounters between structuralist narratology and other theoretical or critical schools (e.g. rhetoric) and disciplines (e.g. cognitive science). Pragmatic and rhetorical approaches are mainly interested in the interaction between textual speakers and narratorial and authorial audiences, while cognitive narratology (cf. Jahn 1997) focuses on processing strategies (e.g. inferences) and interpretive choices. Having imported or assimilated various features (e.g. frames, scripts, preference rules) from other disciplines (esp. cognitive science and linguistics) into narratology, the latter actually constitutes a hybrid kind of approach. Resulting from a felicitous combination of narratology, reception theory, and cognitive science, cognitive narratology emphasizes the interconnectedness between textual data, processing strategies, and interpretive choices.[15]

Approaches subsumed under what I have provisionally called *Postmodern and Poststructuralist Deconstructions of Narratology* have originated from the attempt to subject narratological categories to critical scrutiny, emendation, and deconstruction. Perhaps I am coming at this from the wrong angle, but the terms *Postmodern Narratology* and *Post-*

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[14] For excellent recent work in transgeneric and transmedial narratology, see e.g. Richardson's (1987), (1988), (1997b), (2001) and Jahn's (2001) articles on drama; Müller-Zettelmann (2000) on poetry, and the brilliant overviews by Wolf (1999a), (2002).

[15] Cf. the recent work by Manfred Jahn (1997, 1999), arguably the world's leading and most sophisticated cognitive narratologist at the moment; cf. also Nünning (1998, 1999), Schneider (2000) and Zerweck (2001a, 2001b). For an acute account of the relationship between narratology and reception theory, see Jens Eder's article in the present volume.

*structuralist Narratology* strike me as being so oxymoronic that one might well wonder whether they are not really complete misnomers[16]. In his well-known book *Towards a Postmodern Theory of Narrative* (1996), Gibson, for instance, arguably throws out the narratological baby with the terminological bathwater, when he simply substitutes new, suggestive, and somewhat fanciful terms for quite well-defined narratological concepts: 'force' (Rosset) for 'form,' 'inauguration' (M. Serres) for 'representation,' 'hymen' (Derrida) for 'thematics,' 'chora' (Kristeva) and 'dialogics' (Bachtin) for 'voice,' and 'aion' (Deleuze) for 'event.'

The last three groups testify to the ongoing "re-emergence—and transformation—of narrative analysis across a wide variety of research domains" (Herman 1999b: 3), demonstrating that narrative theory and narrative analysis have long ago stopped being confined to the domain of literary studies. The interest that linguists, philosophers, psychologists, and historians have displayed in narrative has ushered in a new phase in the study of narrative, which has become a subject of interdisciplinary interest. Illustrating that narratology is flourishing not only within the study of literary texts but also in many other disciplines,[17] the approaches listed in groups six, seven and eight demonstrate the "extent to which postclassical narratology is an inherently interdisciplinary project," as Herman (1999b: 20) has recently observed. Moreover, the matrix suggests that there are a number of different *Linguistic Approaches/Contributions to Narratology*, such as stylistics, 'socionarratology,' and speech-act theory, and *Philosophical Narrative Theories*, the most important and influential of which are Possible Worlds Theory and Paul Ricœur's 'Phenomenological Narrative Theory.'

The last group is the most heterogeneous one, consisting of an open list of interdisciplinary projects to the analysis of quite different kinds of narratives, projects that either draw on the insights of narratology or that

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[16] Cf. Richardson (2000b: 169): "Though I suspect that some will reject the name (and perhaps the company) I am constructing for them, I will nevertheless refer to these works as gesturing toward a 'Postmodern Narratology.'"

[17] Cf. Bal (1990: 73); Nash (1990) and Richardson (2000b); for a concise overview of the interdisciplinary extension and application of narratology, see Barry (1990). For illuminating case-studies and concrete suggestions, see the essays in the third section of Herman (1999a), which "show how a postclassical narratology can enrich other fields of study centrally concerned with narrative—all the while being enriched, reciprocally, by those other fields" (Herman 1999b: 20).

have developed independently in other fields. They testify to the enormous increase of interest in the central role that non-fictional narratives play in a variety of fields, ranging from conversational story-telling and oral history to the narratives of psychoanalysis and historiography. *Other Interdisciplinary Narrative Theories* include, for instance, those developed in Artificial Intelligence, anthropology, cognitive psychology and cognitive science, oral history, and historiography. The insights of many of these approaches have recently been applied to narrative theories which are primarily concerned with literary narratives.

It is an open question, however, whether this rise in both number and prominence of narratologies is a laudable or a lamentable development. Whereas many theorists emphasize the important gains to be derived from such interdisciplinary projects, other scholars are violently opposed to them. To narratologists of the old school, for instance, many of the so-called new narratologies will look like strange theoretical bastards on whose hybrid nature even rigorous methodological nurture will never stick. Some inveterate structuralist narratologists have been especially critical of such inter-theoretical alliances, suspecting that such cross-fertilizations will inevitably lead to contamination, ideological infiltration, and degeneration of narratology's 'real' (read: formalist) concerns. Other theorists, however, have expressed less jaundiced opinions, welcoming instead the fact that narratology has at last managed to move beyond structuralism (cf. Fludernik 2000a).

The controversy carried out between Susan Lanser, who inaugurated what has come to be known as 'feminist narratology' (cf. Lanser 1986), and Nilli Diengott (1988) in the prestigious journal *Style* in the late eighties may serve to illustrate what is at stake here.[18] Whereas structuralist narratologists like Diengott demand an 'objective' account of the formal features of narratives uncontaminated by notions of cultural or historical influences and political or ideological relevance, proponents of a feminist narratology insist that such an endeavour is doomed to failure. In contrast to classical narratology, which ignored the concept of 'gender,' feminist narratology assumes that narrative structures and women's writing are determined "by complex and changing conventions that are themselves produced in and by the relations of power that implicate writer, reader, and text" (Lanser 1992: 5). Lanser's intention is "to explore through speci-

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[18] Cf. Lanser (1986), Diengott (1988), and Lanser (1988).

fically formal evidence the intersection of social identity and textual form, reading certain aspects of narrative voice as a critical locus of ideology" (1992: 15). Being the staunch, inveterate, and uncompromising defender of structuralist strongholds that she apparently is, Diengott (1988) severely took Lanser (1986) to task for what she regarded as an irresponsible and dangerous surrender of narratology's true mission and genuine goals. Despite her heroic rearguard action, however, Diengott and other die-hard formalists have not been able to prevent feminist narratology and other hybrid narratologies from gaining ground. Recently, Lanser (1995, 1999) has even daringly suggested possibilities for 'Engendering' and 'Sexing' narratology. Though Lanser and other feminist narratologists have incurred the displeasure of those to whom this sounds suspiciously like an ideological balkanization of narratology, the new approaches have raised pertinent new questions which have proved to be of greater concern to a larger number of critics than the systematic taxonomies, typologies and models so dear to the hearts of narratologists.

I have referred to the Lanser vs. Diengott controversy, which has since been repeated in somewhat similar ways between Lanser (1995) and Gerald Prince (1995a) and more recently between John Bender (1995) and Dorrit Cohn (1995), at some length because it metonymically illustrates what is at stake in the ongoing debates about the directions into which narratology has been moving. Hard-core, i.e. structuralist, narratologists are very sceptical about the new narratologies, suspecting that they will inevitably lead to a contamination that infects 'pure' and 'neutral' description and poetics with the ugly taint of ideology and relativism. In contrast to the purists who want to make 'the world safe for narratology,' as John Bender (1995) so aptly put it, practitioners of the various postclassical narratologies intrepidly rush in where structuralists fear to tread. Whether or not they are fools in doing so, may be an open question, but their work has certainly opened up productive lines of research.

This short overview of recent developments in narratologies may suffice to show that narratology has at last managed to leave the barren ground of structuralism and gone on to greener pastures, but it also raises the question of whether attaching the label of 'narratology' to all of the new theoretical approaches outlined above is really appropriate or not. Though all of the approaches subsumed under the wide umbrella of the term 'postclassical narratology' may well be equal (read: equally concerned with narratives), some of the approaches outlined above are arguably more equal (read: more narratological) than others. Narratology,

especially when prefixed with the adjective 'postclassical,' is an ambiguous term, and it is by no means clear whether different people mean the same thing when they use it.

The above survey of new kinds of approaches and directions in narrative theory may thus serve as a convenient mental map or foil against which the forcefields and tensions between narratology 'proper' and the various new postclassical incarnations or hyphenated narratologies can be gauged. Considering their similarities and differences, two things need to be emphasized. First, though all the new approaches are equally concerned with narratives, both the degree of elaboratedness with which they are consciously theorized and the degree of explicitness with which the underlying theoretical assumptions are set out vary quite a bit. Second, some of the new approaches outlined above are obviously more equal, i.e. more oriented towards genuine narratological concerns, than others. As far as both the degree of theorization and their narratological affiliations are concerned, the spectrum of possibilities might be diagrammed along an axis as shown in the following figure (see figure 4).

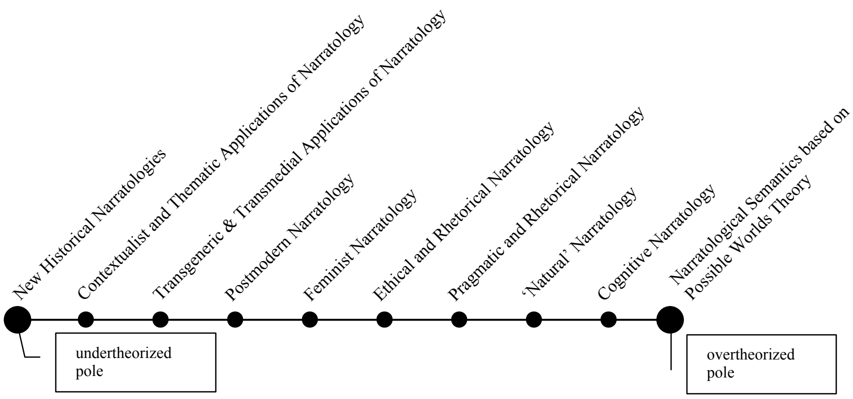



Figure 4: New approaches in narrative theory arranged on an axis of degrees of theorization and 'narratologicalness'

Though it may well go without saying, figure 4, just like the preceding diagrams and the next (and last) model to come, provides merely a provisional model intended to illustrate the fact that different kinds of narrative theories or applications of narratological models can be distinguished ac-

cording to varying degrees of theorization. At the undertheorized pole, there are approaches like the investigations into narratives associated with the new historicism and most of the contextualist and thematic applications of narratology, whereas cognitive narratology, 'natural' narratology, and narratological approaches based on possible worlds theory would be located at the other end of the scale, the pole which anyone but Germans would probably regard as overtheorized. Occupying median points would be 'postmodern narratology,' feminist narratology, ethical and rhetorical narratology, and Pragmatic and Rhetorical Narratology, though the actual position of a scholar's work or a specific study (rather than the generic approaches listed above) on such an axis may vary quite a bit. In other words, feminist narratology is not *per se* less theorized than rhetorical narratology, pragmatic narratology, or cognitive narratology, but the latter tend to be more explicitly and thoroughly theorized than most of the work done in feminist narratology.

## 4. Critique of the Current Proliferation of the Term 'Narratology' and Modest Proposals for its Future Usage

Thus, whether or not it is really a very good idea to continue to refer to all of the new approaches as 'narratology' may well be more than just a moot question, since that term is inevitably fraught with so many unfavourable connotations (including structuralism, binarisms, abstraction, logocentrism, ahistoricism, and untenable ideals of scientific objectivity) that it is likely to put quite a number of people off who might otherwise display genuine interest in the questions raised by the new 'narratologies'[19]. One cannot fail to notice that the term narratology is currently used in a number of quite different senses. Rimmon-Kenan (1989: 157), for instance, defines 'narratology' in a very narrow sense as "that branch of narrative theory that developed in the sixties and early seventies, mainly in France, largely under the aegis of structuralism and its formalist progenitor." By way of contrast, Herman (1999b: 27) uses the term "quite broadly, in a way that makes it more or less interchangeable with *narrative studies*," referring to both structuralist narratology and the host of new narratolo-

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[19] I should like to thank Jürgen Schlaeger, Tom Kindt, Hans-Harald Müller, and Jan Christoph Meister for drawing my attention to this ticklish terminological matter.

gies, which he calls 'postclassical.'[20] Many of the hyphenated or compound narratologies, however, can neither be equated with narratology in the narrow sense in which Rimmon-Kenan and other use the term nor with the much more general term 'narrative studies.'

It may, therefore, be worth thinking about whether it might not be advisable to avoid the terminological confusion resulting from such different usages of the same term. I would like to suggest that one should differentiate more clearly between key terms like narrative studies, narrative theory, narratology, and narratological criticism. There are at least three reasons why it seems advisable not to use the terms narratology and narrative studies, or narratology and narrative theory, for that matter, synonymously.

First, narratology and narrative studies are not synonyms, the extension of the latter term being much greater than that of the former. I should like to suggest that one should use 'narrative studies' as a generic term, as the English equivalent of the German term *Erzählforschung*, designating both all the different disciplines, approaches, and forms of criticism concerned with the study of narrative and narratives. Narrative studies could then be subdivided into narrative theory and analysis or interpretation of narrative(s), the latter being concerned with practical criticism while the former is a theoretical activity. Making another modest proposal, I would suggest that narratology should be distinguished from narrative theory, being a particular form or branch of narrative theory (cf. Fludernik 1999: 900; Punday 1998: 895) rather than narrative theory itself.

Second, though the idea that narrative is ubiquitous in the contemporary world may well be a commonplace by now, there are many different ways of conceiving of and dealing with narrative. Many of the approaches in narrative theory that have been developed since the 1980s are obviously quite distinct from narratology in their orientation, methodology, and research goals. Given both the plethora of theoretical publications devoted to narrative in disciplines other than literary studies and the fact that postclassical narratology has become an inherently interdisciplinary project (cf. Herman 1999b: 20), it seems sensible to use 'narrative theory' as an umbrella term for theoretical work done on the forms and functions of

[20] It may be noted in passing that Herman (1999b: 1) also fails to distinguish between 'narratologies' and 'models for narrative analysis,' two terms which he also uses interchangeably.

narrative. Such a terminological move would allow us to differentiate between e.g. anthropological narrative theories, historiographical narrative theories, philosophical narrative theories, psychological narrative theories, and linguistic narrative theories, and to distinguish these from narratology.

Third, it is desirable to clearly distinguish between narratology as a particular kind of narrative theory and the analysis and interpretation of narratives, though there has always been plenty of "going-and-coming between the analysis of narrative and theoretical reflection," as John Pier[21] has pointed out. When we turn our attention to the relationship between narratology, be it classical or postclassical, and the analysis and interpretation of narratives, it becomes obvious that narratology should not be confused with its applications, despite the fact that the latter, which may be termed "narratological criticism," Prince (1995a: 78) tends to be closely related to the former. On the one hand, interpretations of narratives are not independent of, but rather shaped by the (narrative or other) theories which the critic uses. On the other hand, the investigation of specific narratives "test the validity and rigor of narratological categories, distinctions, and reasonings, they identify (more or less significant) elements that narratologists (may) have overlooked, underestimated, or misunderstood," Prince (1995a: 78). More often than not, however, critics are babes-in-the-woods when it comes to dealing with narratological problems, hardly if ever reflecting upon the analytical categories they are using. Many narratologists, on the other hand, tend to practise their own kind of ostrich-policy, as a rule either eschewing literary criticism altogether or preferring to just theorize about narratives rather than analyse them. With their practitioners living in splendid isolation, the theoretical debates about the methodological problems involved in narratology and the actual practice of interpreting narratives are often completely detached from one another. Though the various branches of narrative theory and the interpretation of narratives are inextricably intertwined, mutually benefitting from one another, it seems advisable to draw a clear terminological distinction between narratology and narratological criticism.

Last but not least, what follows from the modest proposals that have been made is that we might do well to use the term narratology with much more caution and to critically review the current proliferation of ever

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[21] See Pier "On the semiotic Parameters of Narrative" (this volume).

more new 'narratologies.' It is certainly true that narratology has recently risen as a phoenix from its ashes and become "a dynamically evolving field," Herman (1999b: 4), but it seems doubtful whether all of the "post-classical approaches" (ibid.: 6) really constitute new branches or versions of narratology. Though many of the approaches listed above have already demonstrated that they can enrich both interpretations and literary history, illustrating the heuristic uses and usefulness of the narratological toolkit, not all of them arguably fall within the purview of narratology. In contrast to Fludernik (2000a: 92), who maintains that "almost each of these critical schools [i.e. deconstruction, the New Historicism, postcolonial theory] can now boast of its own narratology," I would argue that most of the approaches in question are either mere applications of narratological concepts, i.e. narratological criticism (e.g. in the case of the New Historicism and postcolonial theory), or so far removed from narratological research goals and methodological premises as to be virtually incompatible with narratology. Moreover, in contrast to narratology, which is 'neutral' in that regard[22], most of these schools subscribe to a particular theory of interpretation.

Though I am all in favour of "the move toward integration and synthesis" (Herman 1999b: 11) championed by many proponents of the 'post-classical approaches,' I doubt whether anyone stands anything to gain by disregarding unbridgeable differences between the various new approaches and by accepting at face value that it makes sense to subsume all of the new branches of narrative studies and narrative theory under the—arguably all-too-wide—umbrella of 'postclassical narratology.' The concomitant terminological and conceptual erosions might even lead to the demise of narratology as a discipline, as Jan Christoph Meister has warned[23].

Nonetheless, even the new phase of postclassical narratology arguably features a couple of branches, though not nearly as many as may be suggested by earlier descriptive surveys of the field[24]. On a gliding scale between the poles of 'narrative theory' and 'analysis of narratives,' the

[22] See Kindt/Müller "Narrative Theory and/or/as a Theory of Interpretation" (this volume).

[23] See Meister "Narratology as Discipline: A Case for Conceptual Fundamentalism" (this volume).

[24] Cf. e.g. Herman (1999b); Nünning (2000a); Fludernik (2000a); Richardson (2000b) and Fludernik/Richardson (2000).

branch designated ‘feminist narratology’ occupies a median point, whereas ‘cognitive narratology’ can be situated on the far side of ‘narrative theory,’ having originated from an alliance between cognitive science, reception theory, and narratology. In contrast to say ‘postmodern narratology’ and many narrative theories that have been developed in other disciplines, there is a continuity between ‘classical narratology’ and such theoretical approaches as feminist narratology, cognitive narratology, and ‘natural’ narratology, as indicated by the dotted vertical line linking ‘classical narratology’ and ‘postclassical narratology.’ Figure 5 provides a schematic summary of my modest terminological proposals, trying to map the relations between the terms and domains of narrative studies, narrative theory, narratology, and narratological criticism.

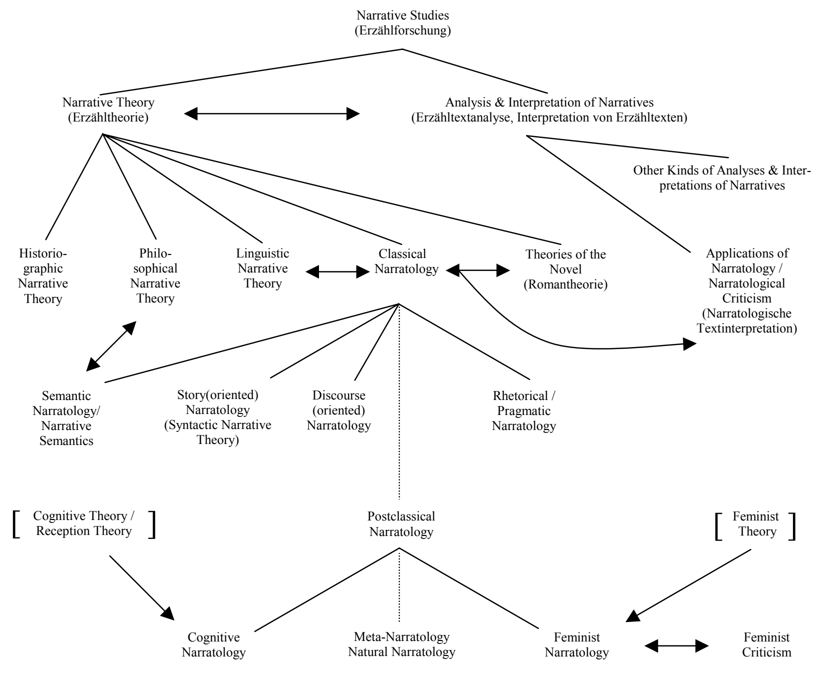



Figure 5: Mapping the relations between narrative studies, narrative theory, narratology, and narratological criticism

Disregarding the diachronical dimension, the model merely represents a synchronous view of the domain and different branches of narrative

studies. Moreover, the dotted line going down from 'classical narratology' to 'postclassical narratology' is not meant to indicate that the former might be outmoded or even obsolete, having been replaced by the latter. On the contrary, as both the articles in the present volume and the works listed in the selective bibliography attached to the present essay serve to show, the topography of the current narratological landscape is characterized by a great degree of diversity, encompassing both 'classical' and 'postclassical' theoretical approaches and investigations: "It would seem that in the history of narrative theory, old models don't die a timely death—they simply pause for a few years before being resurrected in a moderately new form." (Richardson 2000b: 172)

## 5. Conclusion

In short, I am not at all sure whether narratology is really well-served by the fact that the ongoing proliferation of ever more and new approaches to the theory and analysis of narrative(s) is conceived of as a ramification of narratology into narratologies (cf. Herman 1999b: 1). Designating the bewildering plethora of new approaches 'postclassical narratologies' and setting them off from 'classical narratology' is arguably not a descriptive act of classification but a christening ceremony.[25] Though many of the new approaches have the merit of raising interesting new issues, it seems doubtful whether they really have all that much in common with narratology and whether they should really be referred to as 'narratologies' at all. Since some of the so-called postclassical narratologies can be faulted both for being insufficiently theorized and for their lack of methodological rigor, explicitness, and systematicity, they lack the very features which are generally taken to be the defining characteristics of narratology. To designate all of the new directions of research in 'postclassical' narrative theory as 'narratology' is thus arguably both counter-productive and meaningless, since it would empty the term of whatever meaning it may have had in the first place. One need not subscribe to the sort of narratological fundamentalism advocated by Meister in this volume to be wary of referring to all of the new approaches in narrative theory and analysis as 'narratology' or 'narratologies.'

[25] I should like to thank Hans-Harald Müller for this lucid observation.

If we are to make sense of the relationship between narratology and the so-called postclassical narratologies and of the ongoing debates about the status of narratology (cf. Fludernik 2000a: 91ff.) at all, we would be wise to begin by looking at both the plethora of new approaches that have been developed and the theoretical frameworks that inform the practices of 'doing' narratology, or rather narrative theory, narratological criticism or just interpretation of specific narratives, as the case may be. Moreover, postulating a dichotomy between monolithic entities designated 'narratology' and 'postclassical narratology' begs the question because what we are actually faced with is a broad range of hybrid practices and approaches, which occupy various 'spaces in-between' that deserve to be mapped much more carefully. A higher degree of theoretical self-awareness is not only necessary for the development of more sophisticated theories and models of narrative, it is also a prerequisite for gauging the forcefields and tensions between 'narratology' and the various new 'postclassical narratologies' that I have tried to identify, distinguish, and map. So long as the theoretical foundations of many of the 'postclassical narratologies' remain as shaky as they are, attempts at integrating them into a general theory of narrative will either encounter serious obstacles or be in vain. Last but not least, it is arguably not only useful, but necessary to distinguish as clearly as possible between narrative theory, narratology, narratological criticism, and other kinds of analyses or interpretations of specific narratives. Once we do so, we realize that not all of the enterprises that sail under the banner of 'postclassical narratologies' actually pertain to narratology at all, sharing neither its research goals nor its methodology.

Though all of these theses would, of course, need a substantial fleshing out not possible in this forum, and though this paper yields no real conclusions, positivistic or otherwise, it may at least suffice to show that narratology is no longer what it allegedly used to be and that it has developed into a flourishing and highly diversified discipline, branching out in many interesting new directions and managing to keep almost as many professors busy as James Joyce. I have offered these Teutonic hypotheses as a means to sketch and map, if yet in rough outline at least in greater detail than previous uses of the terms 'narratology' have displayed, the varied landscape of current theories and practices of narrative studies. The modest terminological proposals, maps and models should not, however, be confused with the territory of actual research in narratology and narrative theory, which is, of course, far more capacious, diverse, and nuanced than

any model could ever endeavour to be. What Fredric Jameson has said about his model of postmodernism thus applies equally well to the maps and models of narrative theory and narratology presented above:

> I have proposed a 'model' […], which is worth what it's worth and must now take its chances independently; but it is the construction of such a model that is ultimately the fascinating matter, and I hope it will not be taken as a knee-jerk affirmation of 'pluralism' if I say that alternate constructions are desirable and welcome, since the grasping of the present from within is the most problematical task the mind can face. (Jameson 1989: 383f.)

The models, maps and modest proposals offered above are thus not meant to be the last word on any of these complex subjects but rather one of the first words on both a critical reassessment of the so-called new narratologies and the reconceptualization of the relationship between (classical) narratology and the various 'postclassical narratologies.' Many of the latter, I should like to reiterate, arguably deserve to be rechristened because they are applications of narratology (i.e. narratological criticism) or interpretations of narratives informed by other literary or cultural theories rather than narratology. It is impossible to predict in which directions narratology, or the new narratologies, will actually develop, but it is hardly disputable that narrative theory has already reached "a higher level of sophistication and comprehensiveness" (Richardson 2000b: 174) than it has ever had before. The future development of both narratology and the usage of the term 'narratology' is uncertain, but it will be interesting to watch, and even more interesting to make attempts to intervene and offer modest proposals for terminological distinctions and for a more precise usage of key terms.

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# Narratology and Cognitive Reception Theories*

What is narratology? The range of responses is diverse and wide-ranging, so much so that there is no accepted answer to the question. Instead, we should really ask what narratology should be. By adopting this normative phrasing, we make it explicit that our task is to define the field of study systematically, both as a theory and for the purposes of practical research. What functions should narratology perform? What problems and what methods of dealing with them should be considered permissible; conversely, what problems and methods should be excluded from narratology? What are the consequences for research and analysis if narratology is defined in a particular way? To handle these questions adequately, we need to adopt a position that acknowledges both structuralist tradition and contemporary pluralism and is equally mindful of both theoretical standards and the importance of practical study.

The topics under discussion are the aims, objects, and methods of narratology, all of which are closely connected. Thus, deciding on a certain aim or selecting a certain range of objects can entail the use of certain methods. A relationship of just this kind is the subject of this essay, in which I hope to show convincingly that, for both theoretical and pragmatic reasons, the development of narratological theory has much to gain from making more extensive use of concepts and models from cognitive science than has previously been the case.

* My thanks are due to Katja Crone, Hans J. Wulff, and James zu Hüningen for their critical comments.

Since the mid-1980s, if not earlier, an increasing number of narrative theorists have drawn on theories of communication and reception from cognitive science, while others have remained sceptical towards such methods. This essay is intended to stimulate a long-overdue exchange of ideas. If it is to succeed, the underlying premisses and concepts involved must be made explicit—what do we mean when we refer to 'narratology' and 'cognitive theories'?

## 1. Narratology

Understood in a broad sense, narratology is simply narrative theory in general. Understood more narrowly, however, it involves a particular kind of narrative theory, one that can be defined by a variety of very different characteristics—for example, the employment of structuralist methodology; the study of subject matter that is restricted to properties unique to narration, the conditions of possibility of all narratives; or the use of a textual corpus that only contains literary narratives. In a very narrow interpretation of narratology, all these constraints are assumed to apply together[1].

Given this field of possibilities that range from narrative theory in general to a very specific form of narrative theory, it is appropriate to begin not by stating a narrow definition, but rather by introducing a rough working definition which will be refined progressively in the course of our subsequent investigations. In order to arrive at this working definition, we can start with a common kernel of features which characterize research that is and has been carried out under the heading of 'narratology.' This research always involves forms of narrative theory that operate at a high level of abstraction and are primarily concerned with the general elements and structures of narrative that transcend individual texts, particular cultures, and historical periods. The systematic determination and description of these general elements and structures is the primary aim of such forms of narrative theory. This is what distinguishes narratology from work that considers the history, reception, or interpretation of concrete narratives.

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[1] Nünning (1997: 513) is an example of narratology as understood in a broad sense; a more narrow interpretation is represented by the definitions given in Prince (1987: 65). See also Nünning's inventory of multiple narratologies: Nünning (1999).

This provisional definition of narratology leaves plenty of room for manoeuvre. Above all, it leaves three questions unanswered. First, what is it that narratives actually are?[2] Second, what elements and structures of narrative fall under the scope of narratology? And finally, what methods should be employed to examine these structures? We have yet to work out the answers to these questions; the premisses I am about to describe are based on a relatively broad understanding of the scope and range of methods of narratology.

*Method*. Although narratology should continue pursuing the basic questions posed by the paradigm of classical structuralism, it should not be required to adopt the procedures of that paradigm. If we prescribe a particular method, we immediately reduce the potential for further progress. The same open-ended approach is used in other sciences; mechanics, for example, is not just classical Newtonian mechanics but also quantum mechanics.

As far as scope and textual corpus are concerned, I shall assume that three additional assumptions are valid. First, narratology should treat not only linguistic narratives, but also stories presented in other kinds of media (e.g. comic strips, feature films, and computer games), irrespective of whether or not they contain a narrator figure, whether or not they are fictional, and whether or not they are felt to represent works of art[3].

The decision to include non-linguistic narratives has far-reaching consequences because of the great difference between linguistic and non-linguistic systems of signification. The iconic signs used in films, for example, are less tightly bound to rules and conventions than language is; they are not arbitrary and are more strongly influenced by direct sensual factors. To a great extent, visual images are polysemous; only rarely can distinct propositions or speech acts be attributed to them[4]. Consequently, it is questionable whether a narratology which covers non-linguistic texts can function properly when the communication, semiotic, and textual

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2 Livingston (2001) provides an overview of critical responses to this question.

3 This corresponds to Manfred Jahn's definition, in which he draws on the structuralist tradition and describes "narrative" as "anything that tells or presents a story" (Jahn 2001: chap. 1.1). Prince (1997) takes a similar line.

4 On the semiotics of film and image, see Buckland (1999); Nöth (2000: 471–86); Wulff (1999: 25–26). On the perception of images, see Rollins (2001); Grodal (1999: 7, 77). Note also that films are perceived in a predetermined chronological sequence; this has consequences for the construction of a story; see Bordwell (1992).

theories on which it is based are designed with linguistic data in mind. It may well be necessary to assemble our narratology using theories of communication and signification which are applicable to linguistic and non-linguistic texts alike.

Our second assumption is that narratology should be concerned with more than just the elements and structures which constitute the necessary and sufficient conditions of a narrative (or the conditions of possibility of a narrative), or which all narratives, and only all narratives, have in common[5]. Narratology should also account for the elements and structures which are 'just' prototypical properties of a narrative. For a start, after all, it has yet to be shown that the concept of a narrative can actually be defined properly using necessary and mutually sufficient features, when it might well be better understood as a prototypical concept. In addition, excluding prototypical features from narratology would have a wide range of negative consequences for research. For example, many critics would argue that the existence of characters is neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition for a text to be a narrative[6]. It is in narratives, however, that characters appear in their most complex form; conversely, fictional narratives without characters are atypical. Characters, we conclude, are prototypical elements of narrative texts and inextricably linked to other narrative structures. If we exclude them from the concerns of narratology, we expose ourselves to two dangers. First, if we lift a character from its narrative context or consider, as in work on *actant* structures, only those aspects of it that are presumed narratively relevant, we destroy the unity of the object under investigation. Second, if narratology were to refuse to have anything to do with prototypical narrative elements, the latter could easily be ignored in the wider research context. Because of the link between complex character creation and the narrative, the study of characters is nowhere more appropriate than in narratology. Thus, theoretical and pragmatic considerations suggest that the scope of narratology should

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5 The representation of events is an example of a necessary feature—it is present in every narrative. The existence of a narrating authority is an example of a sufficient feature—if a text has a narrator, then that text must contain a narrative. But not every representation of events is a narrative, and not every narrative has a narrator.

6 It should be pointed out, of course, that this issue is anything but uncontroversial. Manfred Jahn, for example, defines "story" as "a sequence of events and actions *involving characters*"; Jahn (2001: N2.1.2; my italics).

include structures and elements which, although not specific to narratives, are typical of and structurally significant in them[7].

Our third assumption is that narratological categories should be suitable for more than just analysing the production and 'real' meaning, or intended reception, of a narrative text. It should also be possible to use them to analyse cases of probable or actual reception in an empirically identified or hypothetically postulated group of recipients. In other words, we should be able to analyse not only the story that is narrated, but also the story that is read or heard. In the case of the narrated story, we begin by using the textual data as the basis for hypotheses regarding authorial intention, communication strategies, and the like, and the characteristics of an idealized model recipient (e.g. the abilities and knowledge possessed by that recipient)[8]. In the case of the received story, our analysis is based not on the properties of such an idealized recipient construct but on assumptions about the characteristics of a particular historically and socioculturally defined group of recipients and the processes by which the text guides its recipients. Both methods are based on hypotheses about basic mental structures involved in communication, reception, and cognition. Only once the reconstruction of the story is available in each case can the work of structural analysis and the application of narratological categories begin.

It is not easy to quantify the implications of the above observations for the historical development of narratological theory when considered in retrospect. What is clear, however, is that it is now no longer unproblematic to adopt a theory of communication which is purely production-orientated or assumes fixed textual meanings and denies the possibility of varying interpretations. Consequently, it would seem appropriate to embark on a fundamental criticism of narratology's underlying attitude to reception theory and, in the broadest sense of the word, psychology.

We have now described the key assumptions regarding the concept and subject matter of narratology which underlie the argument of the fol-

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7 Many studies which have become narratological classics can be interpreted as describing prototypical but not essential structural patterns. This is true of the development of the ideal story described by Todorov, which shifts from equilibrium to disequilibrium and back to equilibrium again, and of Greimas's *actant* structures (see Eder (2001: chap. 8.1). The inclusion of prototypical structures challenges the definitions of narratology suggested by Prince (1987) and Meister (this volume).

8 See Jannidis (2001); Eco (1998).

lowing pages. In the process, a further assumption has also come to light: ideas from communication and reception theory prestructure narratology in a way that is relevant to the formation of narratological theories. Communication, reception, and cognition have a place in the foundations of every narrative theory. Narratology is no exception.

Thus, the way in which we study narratology varies depending on whether we take, say, structuralist, hermeneutic, or constructivist models of communication and reception as our starting point. A number of questions then arise: to what extent do the concepts of narratology depend on the chosen theory of communication—are they explicitly linked to it, or are they rather separated as much as possible from their original context; and what model of communication is most suited to the needs of narratology?

Cognitive theories can provide the communication theory for the foundations of a narratology that is capable of analysing non-linguistic narratives, prototypical narrative structures, and non-intended reception. But what exactly do we mean by 'cognitive theories'?

## 2. Cognitive Theories of Communication and Reception

Narration implies communication, communication implies reception, and reception implies cognition. There would appear to be a direct path leading from narratology to the theories of cognitive science, and concepts from such theories have indeed been represented in narratological definitions and structural models since the mid-1980s at the latest (e.g. concepts such as 'cognitive schema,' 'mental model,' 'frame,' and 'inference'). In the English-language literature on film theory, cognitivism is an established model, if not indeed the dominant one; in literary theory, on the other hand, it has only become more widely represented in the relatively recent past[9]. The connection between narrative theory and cognitive science has become the theme of anthologies, periodicals, and research pro-

[9] Examples of a connection between the methods of narrative theory and cognitive science in film theory include Bordwell (1985), Branigan (1992), and other theorists, such as Currie (1995), Tan (1996), and Grodal (1999). In Germany, one can cite Wuss (1993); Ohler (1994); Wulff (1995). Fludernik (1996), Jahn (1997), and Nünning (1999) represent a comparable combination of methods in literary theory. Forerunners of this trend can be seen in the film psychology of Münsterberg (1996; first edition 1916) and empirical literary criticism; e.g. Groeben (1980); Schmidt (1991).

jects, and the term 'cognitive narratology' has even become the subject of discussion[10].

There are many different kinds of cognitive theory available for narratologists to exploit: theories of intentionality and imagination originating in the analytical philosophy of the mind, models of perception and categorization from cognitive psychology, and theories of textual interpretation from linguistics. Some of these approaches are empirical, others non-empirical, and they have a disparate range of essential basic concepts: some of them describe mental representational structures with the help of cognitive schemata, others turn to propositions or mental models[11]. But they also have certain fundamental features in common. Cognitive theory treats communication and reception as active, constructive, rationally motivated, and cognitively guided processes of information processing that are anchored in human physicality and experience. Cognitive theory sees the level of mental processes (e.g. perception, imagination, judgment, memory, comprehension, and inference) as an indispensable, conceptually fundamental part of the explanation of social (semiotic) activity. Cognitive theories study this mental level using the methods of analytical philosophy and/or empirical psychology. The assumption that mental representations exist generally has a central role[12]. These features distin-

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[10] The term 'cognitive narratology' appears to have been introduced by Jahn (1997); it can be found in Nünning (2000) and elsewhere. An anthology on *Narrative Theory and the Cognitive Sciences*, edited by David Herman, is scheduled to appear in 2003 (see <http://www2.bc.edu/~richarad/lcb/fc/ntcs.html> accessed 11 November 2002). A research project entitled 'Cognitive Reception Theory,' which also addresses narratological questions, was established at the University of Tübingen in 2001 (<http://www.uni-tuebingen.de/uni/ner/CoRecTdt.html> accessed 11 November 2002). The first issue of the online magazine *Image [&] Narrative* was devoted to the subject of cognitive narratology (<http://millennium.arts.kuleuven.ac.be /narrative/articles.-cfm> accessed 11 November 2002).

[11] For further information on cognitive science, see Posner (1999); Rusch (1999). On cognitive psychology, see Anderson (1985). On the theory of mental schemata, see for example Bartlett (1932); Rumelhart (1975); Bordwell (1985). On propositional models of textual interpretation, see Kintsch (1998); van Dijk (1980). On mental model theory, see Johnson-Laird (1989). On cognitive metaphor theory and physicality, see Lakoff/Johnson (1999). On folk psychology and simulation, see Gordon/Cruz (2001). Rickheit/Strohner (1991) provide an overview from a linguistic perspective.

[12] On the definition of cognitivism in general, see Lakoff and Johnson (1999: 3–73). For the more specific perspective of film theory, see Bordwell (1989); Currie (1999); Eder (2001: chaps. 1.2 and 2.1). Ronald de Sousa has shown that the term 'cognition' cannot

guish cognitivism from other models of reception, such as structuralism and semiotics (which refer above all to the concept of code) and psychoanalysis (which gives priority to the influence of unconscious urges).

Only a small number of cognitive theories have so far attempted to model the entire communication process in detail. They frequently begin by assuming a structural correspondence between the poles of production and reception: the narration at the narrating end anticipates a particular kind of reception. This anticipation, which directs production, is based on conventional psychological inferences. It rests on the implicit assumption that there are standardized mental structures, intersubjectively shared cognitive data, and anthropologically constant response patterns. In this sense, a significant part of production can be seen as anticipated reception. This may be why cognitive research tends to focus on aspects of reception, the interaction of text and recipient. I shall use the description 'cognitive reception theories' as a convenient collective term for theories that recruit concepts from cognitive science in their efforts—quoting somewhat freely from Christian Metz—to understand how texts or narratives are understood. The attribute 'cognitive' does not however mean that the emotional side of reception is to be ignored. On the contrary, cognitive theories allow us to understand this area more accurately than ever before[13].

The role of cognitive reception theories is the subject of a considerable debate in narratology. Attitudes range from outright rejection to partial integration to the radical claim that narratology should actually be treated as part of cognitive science[14]. My aim in the coming pages is to summarize

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be equated with information processing; rather, it focusses only on those forms of information processing where mental representations are involved: de Sousa (2002); cf. Carroll (1998: 272).

13 For outlines of equivalent models of film reception, see for example Tan (1996); Carroll (1999); Eder (2002); Eder (2001: chap. 10). Picard (1998) and Mandl and Reiserer (2000) both provide a general summary of cognitive theories of emotion.

14 We can construct a scale of seven possible relationships between cognitive reception theories and narratology: (1) incompatibility, (2) unrelated coexistence, (3) the heuristic use of cognitive theory, (4) the modular addition and utilization of cognitive theory, (5) the partial integration of concepts and models from cognitive theory, (6) a narratology anchored in cognitive theory, and (7) a narratology which is part of cognitive theory. Herman (2000) is one example of an argument in favour of the seventh, strong possibility. I, on the other hand, shall merely attempt to rule out (1) and (2) and make (3) to (6) plausible.

the arguments of the opposing positions and show that it is plausible for narratology to make use of elements of cognitive reception theories. The main arguments put forward against such integration are my starting point.

## 3. Arguments against the Integration of Cognitive Theories

Four basic arguments can be identified:

*Superfluity*. This argument holds that narratological models can be developed equally well without drawing on any form of reception theory whatsoever—perhaps, for example, by refining a catalogue of purely logically possible narrative structures, inductively identifying invariant forms, or employing theories of meaning that do not rely on theories of reception. It is clear that the involvement of reception theories would be superfluous in such cases.

*Independence*. This argument goes further and stresses that if narratology integrates cognitive theories, it will be infiltrated by elements from other disciplines (e.g. empirical psychology). Because such elements lie outside the competence of the humanities, narratology could lose its independence as a discipline and be reduced to a subsector of cognitive science.

*Flexibility of application*. This objection points out that the integration of cognitive reception theories restricts the functionality of narratological tools. The ultimate purpose of narratology is to provide structural models and analytical categories which can be used for interpreting individual works or handling questions of history and cultural theory. These models and categories should be as uncontentious and free of prior assumptions as possible. They are used to supply the initial narratological descriptions on which a variety of other approaches can build. If, however, elements of cognitive theory are introduced not at this later level but in the narratological descriptions themselves, the range of applications to which the latter can subsequently be put is reduced—psychoanalytical interpretations, for example, are not easily reconcilable with such descriptions.

*Incompatibility*. The final criticism concedes that certain components of narratology rely on reception theory but does not accept that cognitive theory is the best source for them. More appropriate are alternative models of reception—those, for example, of psychoanalysis, the phenomenological hermeneutic aesthetics of reception, and structuralism. Such models, however, are incompatible with cognitivism.

At this point, cognitivists can attack each of the above arguments directly. The first three presuppose that there are no disadvantages for narratology if it refuses to make use of reception theory in any form. The fourth assumes that there are more accurate representations of reception than the models of cognitive science. Neither of these assumptions is particularly secure, to say the least.

Starting with the superfluity argument, it is indeed the case that some characteristic narratological distinctions operate without having to invoke reception theory in any form—a narrator figure, for example, can only be either involved or not involved in the story it narrates; this is a purely logical distinction and can be represented without using concepts from reception theory. The same does not appear to be true, however, of other narratological concepts such as that of narrating itself or the unreliable narrator. Reception theories are a necessary part of a framework of pragmatic semiotics. Without them, the connection between signs and represented objects is obscured and important structures are hidden from view. And when that happens, the flexibility argument is also fatally undermined.

The fears which the independence argument exploits become groundless if the inclusion of empirical (e.g. psychological) ideas, far from heralding the capitulation of independent theoretical work in the humanities, is seen simply as an instance of cross-disciplinary fertilization. Narratology and cognitive theory are separated by the focus and form of the problems they consider. Narratology investigates the structures of narratives; cognitive science investigates the structures of cognition. Narratology needs cognitive reception theories, but only as a general framework. Furthermore, not all cognitive theories are empirical; and if empirical discoveries are integrated into narratology, they are adopted not for their own sake, nor to give empirical narratology or reception research the go-ahead, but rather in order to develop an analytical model which has empirical support, is suitable for use in (but not dependent on) empirical research, and provides new heuristic resources.

We can respond to the incompatibility argument by citing work which, as a result of thorough analysis, uncovers problems in purely structuralist and psychoanalytical models of reception[15]. Besides, cognitivism is in no

[15] Noël Carroll has revealed several problems in psychoanalytical positions; Carroll (1988). For a criticism of the structuralist code model see, in the context of film theory,

way fundamentally incompatible with other approaches in the first place: unambiguous efforts to integrate cognitive theories can be found in psychoanalysis and structuralism[16]. This cannot be mere coincidence—cognitivism may well be suited to explaining concepts of semiotics, phenomenology, and the aesthetics of reception and making them compatible with empirical methods[17].

The four arguments against the integration of cognitive theories cannot be disproved in the short space available here. More convincingly, however, we can undermine their premisses by demonstrating the benefits, and thus the plausibility, of integrating cognitive reception theories. There are at least three key ways in which cognitive theories can support, refine, and add to narratology: they can contribute to the determination of narrative structures and basic narrative elements, the definition of basic narratological concepts, and the applications of narratological models.

## 4. Determining Narrative Elements and Structures

Isolating the essential elements and structures of narrative is one of the central objectives of narratology. The central question of this first topic, therefore, is whether all narrative elements and structures can be described appropriately without referring to cognitive reception theories.

Represented objects—events, characters, and narrating authorities[18]—are obviously essential narrative elements. Essential structures are composed of the relations between such elements of the narrated world and

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Livingston (1992) and, in the context of literary theory, Jannidis (2001: 46–54). The widespread tendency to employ only the code model of reception is problematic enough where linguistic texts are concerned but is even more inadequate when it comes to non-linguistic narratives. It does not take much reflection to reach the conclusion that the concept of codes is an insufficiently complex model of reception; besides, it also obscures the diversity of the receptive processes which can be described more precisely and clearly using psychological methods.

16 On the integration of cognitive theories into psychoanalysis and (pragmatic) semiotics, see Holland (2001) and Buckland (1995), (1999) respectively. The writings of Hans J. Wulff—e.g. Wulff (1999)—are an example of similar work in the German-speaking countries.

17 For example, the phenomenon of horizon fusion (Gadamers 'Horizontverschmelzung') could be described as a temporary transfer of mental schemata. The encyclopedia concept of Eco's semiotics is also closely related to the ideas of schema theory.

18 Chatman's events and existents; see Chatman (1978).

their properties. At least some narrative elements are inherently structured—events require chronological and causal relations between states and, in most cases, relations between characters. But this certainly does not mean that we have securely established what the elements and structures of narrative are. For a start, we need to specify the systematic level at which they are located. Are they found in the real act of narration? Or the medium of this act, the linguistic or audiovisual text? Or in abstract meanings, propositions, macrostructures? Or in the mental representations of recipients?

Furthermore, the explicit statements made by narrative texts about their narrated worlds are almost always incomplete. The majority of what the narrative suggests to be the case is derived from implicit statements and has to be deduced by the recipient by means of inference. This is particularly well illustrated by the example of montage in films: a character stands atop a cliff, admiring the landscape—a shadow—a hand—a scream—a murder, an event that is never explicitly shown, only suggested. If narratology is to develop general models of possible narrative elements and structures, it must have access to criteria for determining and identifying those elements and structures and locating them in the system. Narratology should be able to answer the question 'how do we determine the objects in (fictional) narratives, and what is their ontological status?'

Thus, narratology needs to outline theories of the reference, pragmatics, and semantics of narratives. It needs a theoretical basis that explains the nature of narrative communication, the difference between fictional and factual narration, what kind of entities fictive characters and events are, how narrated worlds and stories are constituted, the relationship between a sequence of signs and a story, what narrative texts are, how the meanings of texts come into being, and the abilities that human beings need in order to understand and produce narratives. In some cases, the answers to questions such as these have a direct effect on the modelling of narrative elements and structures. The determination, analysis, and description of narrative structures is directly affected by our conception of characters and events—are they concrete or abstract objects, complexes of signs, propositional structures, or mental models?[19] And it is hardly pos-

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[19] An overview of the controversial debate concerning the ontology of characters, which can theoretically be extended to the ontology of fictional events, can be found in Rim-

sible to decide which of these possibilities is the case without also deciding to employ a form of reception theory.

With the help of cognitive reception theories, the elements and structures of the narrated world and its representation can be determined with a relatively high degree of precision and clarity[20]. Cognitive science provides models of the narrative competence of producers and recipients that represent the most comprehensive available summaries of the mental factors involved in the making of narrated worlds and stories. Knowledge of codes, encyclopedic knowledge, and other types of knowledge are necessary, but production and reception are also influenced by typical patterns and tendencies of perception, judgment, and emotion. Cognitive science allows us to take textual evidence and use it to formulate reasonable hypotheses about the possible, probable, actual, or intended make-up of narrated worlds. Only by specifying what inferences can be presupposed can we distinguish, for example, between definite and indefinite elements in a story. As Manfred Jahn has shown, cognitive theory makes us less likely to fall into the trap of supposing that there is a one-to-one correspondence between linguistic (or audiovisual) forms and specific narrative functions[21].

Once the above observations are taken into account, it becomes questionable whether narratology really can describe all the relevant narrative structures without the tools of cognitive theory. By making it possible to map out the make-up of narrative worlds, cognitive reception theories allow us to identify new structures (e.g. relating to characters) at the level of the represented material. We shall have more to say on this later. Then there are structures whose description is obviously dependent on recep-

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mon-Kenan (1996: 33) and Eder (2001: chaps. 1-2). On the discussion in analytical philosophy, see Proudfoot (1992); Currie (1990: chap. 4). While characters are often seen here as non-existent or fictive (abstract) objects, in structuralism they are often treated as textual structures; Ralf Schneider considers them to be mental models: Schneider (2000).

[20] Uri Margolin has established that cognitive theories, despite their different initial assumptions, produce results that are remarkably similar to those of theories of the semantics of fictional worlds as developed, for example, by Lubomír Dolezel and Marie-Laure Ryan. But it cannot be determined which theory is primary; Margolin (2000: 356–57). Cognitive theories do, however, have the advantage of providing points of connection to empirical theories and investigations that make explanation and hypothesis testing possible.

[21] See Jahn (1997).

tion. In this case, we are dealing, for example, with relations involving represented objects with respect to their emotional effect and the attention they are intended to attract on the part of the recipient. Thus, in one of its many senses the dramaturgical term 'climax' denotes a representation of an event that outdoes all other such representations in its potential to attract attention and bring forth intense emotion[22].

The themes of dramaturgy and rhetoric take us into an area of relations that depend on a text's effect, an area of structures that can only be grasped from a reception-orientated point of view. From such a perspective, there are a number of representational structures in a narrative that serve, for example, to activate cognitive processes in the recipient that lead to the story being understood. Other such structures serve to trigger emotional processes. Against this background, we can describe relationships between structures that guide comprehension and influence emotion. Carl Plantinga, for example, discusses scenes of empathy in film that are marked by a particular set of elements in their representation and content[23]. Might not the frequency of such scenes of empathy in a film be a narratological category? What justification can there be for excluding structures of emotional influence from narratological analysis?

Finally, there are specifically narrative emotional structures. Here, emotional effects such as plot-related suspense, curiosity, surprise, and empathy presuppose the representation of events. Such emotional phenomena also have a role in making a narrative an (ideal) typical narrative; that is to say, they play a part in determining the narrativity of a narrative. Recent work in cognitive science means it is now possible to develop theses about the structures that narratives use to influence emotion[24].

The second topic, closely related to the first, concerns the definition of narratological terminology. Can all the terms of narratology really be adequately defined without drawing on concepts from reception theory in order to explain them? Some narratologists reply 'no,' citing terms that range from individual phenomena at the discourse level to the concept of the narrative itself. Manfred Jahn's criticism of terms such as 'free indi-

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22 See Eder (1999: 91–95).

23 See Plantinga (1999).

24 Instructive examples for film narration can be found in the *Passionate Views* anthology: Plantinga and Smith (1999); Grodal (1999); Tan (1996).

rect discourse'[25] and Ansgar Nünning's revised definition of the criteria for applying the term 'unreliable narrator'[26] come to mind here.

Edward Branigan, David Bordwell, and Monika Fludernik even go so far as to define fundamental terms such as 'narration,' 'narrative,' and 'narrativity' with reference to concepts of cognitive science[27]. Branigan, a film theorist, locates narrative not in the text but rather in the minds of the recipients and producers. We are concerned, he argues, with a principle of reception that transforms textual data into a narrated world with a story in the course of cognitive processing (or the opposite, a principle of production that converts story and diegesis into a text)[28]. David Bordwell defines film narration as a process of positioning textual pointers which interact at the levels of plot and the medium of representation to guide the audience into and then in constructing the story[29].

We do not have to see such definitions as flawless in order to share their key assumption, the assumption of a pragmatic framework. If someone narrates, this means that that someone produces a sequence of signs in order to activate in a recipient cognitive and emotional processes that

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[25] According to Jahn, many narratological concepts concerning the discourse level (terms such as "free indirect discourse" and "descriptive sentence") suggest a covariance of form and function that does not actuality exist. They are restricted to a contingent standard case and therefore reductive and oversimplified, and this leads to problems when we come to apply them. Jahn redefines the terms with the help of the concept of frames; see Jahn (1997); Jahn and Fludernik subject Stanzel's narrative situations to a similar assessment.

[26] In Nünning's view, the criteria for applying the term 'unreliable narrator' must be set out in terms of reception theory. In order to be able to determine whether a narrator is indeed unreliable, we must take into consideration the expectations, frames, knowledge, norms, and so on of recipients; Nünning (1999).

[27] The key basic feature of being narrative is, Fludernik argues, experientiality, the representation of human experience at the level of the plot and its narrative presentation. The portrayal of human experience this involves is based on cognitive parameters shared by the producers and recipients of narratives: schemata of experience of the world, social perception, narrative conventions, and reception strategies; Fludernik (1996).

[28] "Narrative in film is the principle by which data is converted from the frame of the *screen* into a *diegesis*—a world—that frames a particular *story*, or sequence of actions, in that world; equally, it is the principle by which data is converted from story onto screen," Branigan (1992: 36).

[29] "In the fiction film, narration is *the process whereby the film's syuzhet and style interact in the course of cueing and channeling the spectator's construction of the fabula*," Bordwell (1985: 53).

lead to a particular story being imagined. Basing narratology on pragmatics and reception theory in this way has implications for every aspect of narratological theory. The levels of pragmatic function and emotion inducement are now counted among those where prototypical features of narratives can be found. By integrating cognitive theories into narratology, narratologists are no longer compelled to define narrative phenomena exclusively using purely structural features. Instead, they can combine structural features with functional, reception-dependent features, and that has advantages for the applications of narratological categories.

## 5. The Applications of Narratological Models

This brings us to our third and final major topic. The flexibility of application argument opposes the integration of cognitive reception theories on the grounds that they reduce the range of contexts in which the tools of narratological analysis can be put to use. In response, however, we can counter that this is more than compensated for by the increase in the applicability of narratological categories to other areas.

I have already described how cognitive parameters allow us to determine not just textual structures but also, and directly, the functions they perform in the processes of comprehension and emotional experience that take place in the recipient. With that, the elements of the pragmatic complex of production, text, and reception are no longer artificially separated. The text now presents itself as a system of elements by means of which reception is directed. The consequences? Traditional dramaturgical concepts could be drawn into narratology. As well as just describing structures, narratology could simultaneously formulate hypotheses about the functional explanations for them. Narrative structures could be described not only as static entities but also as processes such as changes in characters and the creation of red herrings in the plot, to name but a few. Cognitive and emotional aspects could be brought together in a mutually informative relationship. Such a step forward would enhance the potential of narratology to be applied in other contexts, for example to contribute to the analysis of narratives in terms of cultural theory and ideological criticism. In addition, the integration of models from reception theory could inform empirical evaluations of narrative analyses.

A compound model of narratology can thus be justifiably put forward as a counterpart to the concept of narratology as a unified module with a minimum of prior assumptions. To take a metaphor from the world of

computers, we might say that the compound model is equivalent to an operating system that, although not fully compatible with certain applications (theories of interpretation), is in many other ways more user-friendly, more versatile, and faster. The modular narratology, on the other hand, as the anti-integrationists suggest, is equivalent to an operating system that is compatible with all applications but may well be slower, less precise, and more unstable. Perhaps the two operating systems, or theoretical paradigms, are not really competitors at all—perhaps they are ideally suited to complement one another?

## 6. An Example: Contemporary Theories of Character

We shall now round off the general points discussed above by discussing an example which provides a more concrete demonstration of the advantages of integrating cognitive reception theories. The example in question involves outlining a cognitive theory of character in feature films[30]. Characters are prototypical narrative elements and represent a classic area of narratological interest, having been studied by figures such as Bremond, Propp, Greimas, and Barthes. Characters are indisputably part of the scope of narratological research. To exclude them from it would be to draw an artificial dividing line straight through the middle of the content of the narrated world and the structures which are found in narratives, thus destroying our ability to see their unique coherence.

The theory of character has, not least because narratological research has concentrated on plot and narrative perspective, been neglected for a considerable time. The situation has changed, however, in recent years. Moreover, almost all recent theories of character draw on elements of cognitive science[31]. Far from being a coincidence, this is a sign that cognitivism offers fresh hope of getting to grips with this difficult field.

The basic idea of most cognitive film theories is that viewers use cues in the film to construct mental models of the characters, in other words, complex representations of the characters and their qualities. When anthropomorphic characters are involved, this process of (re)construction,

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[30] This theory is discussed in more detail in Eder (2001).

[31] For example, Gerrig and Allbritton (1990); Smith (1995); Culpeper (2000); Wulff (1997); Schneider (2000); Jannidis (2001); Eder (2001). An early forerunner is Grabes (1978).

which I shall refer to as 'character synthesis,' follows a path that is in many ways similar to how we perceive real people in society—in the real world too we are required to assemble a particular image of the fellow human beings with whom we interact. The process of character synthesis, however, takes place within a fictional frame and is textually guided. The audiovisual text directs the development of character models in a process of characterization with the help of a multitude of techniques: actors' performances, lighting, framing, and so on. An example of such a technique at the level of the represented material is the presentation of a character's behaviour, from which conclusions can be drawn regarding the inner properties of that character.

However, textual structures are not the only factor to have a role in character synthesis. On the part of the viewer, mental structures and individual factors also have a role to play, and the character model emerges only from the interaction between them and the text. Examples of cognitive factors include mental schemata, knowledge of social roles and narrative conventions, images of man, implicit personality theories, and individual psychological factors such as attributive tendencies, the influence of attention and memory, emotional reactions, the primacy effect, the halo effect, and the tendency to explain actions as due primarily to the properties of a character. On this basis, viewers are able, right from the start, to perceive characters as unities and determine the qualities which are combined in them. In turn, narratologists can use cognitive theories to help arrive at a hypothetical reconstruction of how viewers assign qualities to a character.

In this way, we can trace the process by which a central element of narrative comes into being. Characters, we see, are not parts of a text but intentional objects. When we talk about characters, we are able to do so because of a generalization of mental models, character representations, that can be attributed to real or hypothetical recipients. On the one hand, these models are textually based; on the other, however, they are analogous to real people. Characters, therefore, can be examined at two levels: first, as elements of the narrated world that are similar to people; second, as artistic material, as artefacts. As a result, we have a robust way of determining the internal structures of individual characters; characters are no longer reduced, as in *actant* models, to their function in the plot.

If we understand the character as at once a textually based construct and a mimetic system of physical and personal qualities (fictional qualities such as physical size, intelligence, and sense of humour), our descrip-

tion of that character can draw on psychological theories without running the risk of succumbing to naive psychologism. For example, we can compose a profile of a character's personality and, in the process, enlist the assistance of a catalogue of personal qualities such as those found in script-writers' handbooks. Or we can employ methods from personality psychology as a heuristics. In this approach, characters are not seen as a simple sum of qualities; instead, they possess a system of hierarchically ordered, interconnected, and interrelated qualities.

But viewers and readers can also perceive and evaluate characters at another level, the level of artefacts—they can be classified as realistic, multidimensional, or stereotypical. Until now, it has not always been clear what the criteria for attributing artefacts with such qualities are. The cognitive approach allows us to clarify the situation. For example, characters might be considered realistic if they correspond to certain representational conventions and a viewer's ideas of reality. Typical characters might be those that can be immediately slotted into a mental schema. Similar criteria could be proposed for other artefact qualities.

It is evident, then, that cognitive reception theories can make it easier to analyse individual characters and their development in the narrative process. Not only that; they can improve the analytical system itself. Furthermore, there are other areas which can be successfully explored by employing concepts from cognitive theory. These areas include the structures involved in character groups, in the relationship between characters and their actions, in perspective, and in our emotional engagement with characters. And many of the findings of such a theory of character can even be extended to cover other objects in the narrated world—events, for example.

## 7. Conclusion

Cognitive theories of reception and communication model the connections between textual information, mental representations, practical communication, and narratological concepts. They embed the theory of narrative texts in a pragmatic theory of narration. This is accompanied by a view of narratives that is orientated around the impressions they make; it investigates the structures in narrative texts not as self-contained isolated units but as strategic elements in a pragmatic context: structure has a function. Cognitive theories give narratology access to new kinds of narrative elements and structures (e.g. structures of character and emotional

influence) and potential new ways of defining and explaining narrative phenomena. With the help of cognitive reception theories, we can describe procedural processes of narration and comprehension more accurately, determine medium-specific narrative styles more precisely, and link narratology more easily to wider questions of interpretation, cultural analysis, history, and so on. In this light, the four main arguments against integrating elements of cognitive science appear less convincing than at first sight. We began by asking what narratology should be; I hope to have shown that the scientific community—and the adjective is important—should in its search for answers employ cognitive theories of reception more intensively and systematically than has previously been the case.

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# Regrounding Narratology: The Study of Narratively Organized Systems for Thinking

## 1. Prolegomena for a Future Narratology

Although recent work in fields including discourse analysis, narratology, and narrative psychology[1] has thrown light on the forms and functions of stories, the project of developing an integrated, cross-disciplinary approach to narrative analysis is still only in its incipient phase. Because research on narrative remains over-compartmentalized, theorists have yet to explore (let alone exploit) the many important parallels between humanistic and social-scientific approaches to stories, for example. This chapter outlines some strategies for working against the grain of such disciplinary segregation. Focusing on the link between narrative and cognition, the chapter argues that to study how narrative functions as a powerful and basic tool for thinking—to begin taking the measure of stories as a cognitive and communicative practice woven into the very fabric of intelligence—theorists must overcome the divisions of labor that currently separate humanists, philosophers, specialists in human-computer interaction, and social scientists.

Flying in the face of such compartmentalization, in everyday life people incorporate stories into a wide range of activities. Stories enable humans to carry out spontaneous conversations, make sense of news reports in a variety of media, produce and interpret literary texts, create and assess medical case histories, and provide testimony in court. My chapter

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[1] Crossley (2000).

suggests that to account for the pervasiveness of narrative across so many settings, its deep-rootedness in a variety of human practices, narratologists must start to align their work more closely with research initiatives centering on the sociointeractional foundations of intelligence.

According to these initiatives, theorists across the disciplines need to engage in a major rethinking of thinking. In the new dispensation, thinking should be defined as a domain-specific and goal-directed enterprise[2], i.e., a socially situated effort to resolve problems located within and shaped by particular spheres of endeavor. By the same token, cognition should be viewed as a supra- or transindividual activity distributed across groups functioning in specific contexts, rather than as a wholly internal process unfolding within the minds of solitary, autonomous, and desituated cognizers. Thus, instead of being abstract, individualistic, and ratiocinative, thinking in its most basic form is grounded in particular situations, socially distributed, and targeted at specific purposes or goals. A pressing task for narratologists today is to reexamine their basic research methods and aims in light of this cognitive-scientific version of Copernicus' revolution. With mental activity now seen as deriving from and feeding back into—rather than preceding and "guaranteeing"—sociopractical activity (see sections 3 and 7 below), narrative theorists are uniquely positioned to investigate how stories of different types support problem-solving efforts distributed across groups and anchored in various forms of practice.

The present chapter thus outlines strategies for regrounding narratology in the new explanatory paradigm just outlined—a paradigm emerging from cross-disciplinary research on the social constitution and distribution of intelligence. Using Edith Wharton's 1934 story "Roman Fever" as my tutor-text, I characterize stories as a socio-semiotic resource for cognition. Although ideas from narrative theory can help illuminate story artifacts like Wharton's, classical narratology cannot of itself come to terms with narrative viewed as a tool for thinking. Instead, as my chapter suggests, narratology must be regrounded, its purview broadened by a reconsideration of its origins and a more extensive integration of concepts and methods from other fields, particularly those clustered within the "umbrella discipline" of cognitive science[3,4]. Hence, to make its case, my

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2 Hirschfeld/Gelman (1994); Lave (1988); Lave/Wenger (1991); Rogoff (1990).

3 See Herman (2001; under review).

chapter synthesizes several research traditions, including narratological work on focalization, consciousness representation, and "subordination relations"[5] between narrative levels; sociolinguistic accounts of storytelling as the result of finely calibrated mechanisms for joint participation, or "co-narration,"[6] and research on socially distributed thinking that stems from the "sociocultural" approach of L. S. Vygotsky[7], whose ideas have been extended by subsequent theorists[8].

My next section provides a synopsis of "Roman Fever" to help orient the ensuing discussion. Sections 3–6 then use "Roman Fever" to sketch out ways of regrounding narratology, which I here recast as the study of narratively organized systems for thinking. Section 7 concludes the chapter, outlining directions for further research on issues only broached here.

## 2. A Synopsis of "Roman Fever"

"Roman Fever" furnishes a retrospective account of an encounter between "two American ladies of ripe but well-cared-for middle age,"[9] Grace Ansley and Alida Slade. The setting is the terrace of a Roman restaurant overlooking "the outspread glories of the Palatine and the Forum" (342), a "vast Memento Mori" (346) triggering reflections (spoken as well as unspoken, shared as well as individual) about the experiences of the two women when they first met in Rome more than twenty-five years earlier (352). This story thus retrospectively records two characters engaged in retrospective activity of their own, collaborating on the production of a narrative that both bears the imprint of and enables the activity of retrospection itself.

As the extradiegetic-heterodiegetic narrator recounts in the first part of the story, in the years following their initial encounter in Rome, the two women "had lived opposite each other—actually as well as figuratively"

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4 In Wilson and Keil's (1999) scheme, the cognitive sciences encompass six "confederated disciplines": philosophy; psychology; the neurosciences; computational intelligence; linguistics and language; and culture, cognition, and evolution.

5 Genette (1980); Rimmon-Kenan (1983).

6 Norrick (2000).

7 Vygotsky (1978).

8 Cf. Frawley (1997); Hutchins (1995a), (1995b); John-Steiner (1997); Wertsch (1985), (1991), (1998).

9 Wharton [1934] (1991: 342).

(344) in New York. In the here and now of the story-world, with their husbands having died at some indefinite point in the past (but within months of one another), Grace and Alida happen to have once again "run across each other in Rome, at the same hotel, each of them the modest appendage of a salient daughter" (344)[10]. Despite being "exquisitely lovely" when they first met, Grace is now "evidently far less sure than [Alida] of herself and of her rights in the world" (343). Indeed, Grace appears "smaller and paler" than Mrs. Slade, who is by contrast "fuller, and higher in color, with a small determined nose supported by vigorous black eyebrows" (342). Although Grace appears to be more diminutive and less assertive than Alida, these descriptive details need to be weighed against the role played by Grace as a participant in the embedded narrative—the story about the past—that emerges over the course of the women's interaction at the restaurant. Specifically, as their encounter unfolds, the two characters shift from more or less desultory conversation about their current Roman surroundings to the co-construction of a story about Grace's past sexual relationship with Delphin Slade, the man to Alida was at that time engaged and whom she eventually went on to marry. Each woman has, at the outset, only partial information about what happened the night Grace was supposed to meet Delphin for a tryst at the Colosseum. Their co-narration of what occurred that night—a co-telling driven by motives that are agonistic and oppositional rather than cooperative and harmonious—affords a fuller picture of what transpired some twenty-five years before. The story jointly constructed by Alida and Grace has painful consequences (the reader must assume) for both characters.

After somehow learning of Grace's and Delphin's mutual attraction, the future Mrs. Slade forged a letter putatively written by Delphin—in order to lure Grace to the cold, damp Colosseum. There, Alida had presumed, she might be made ill by the night air, with "Roman fever" neutralizing her as a threat to the Slades' scheduled marriage. After the night in question, Grace is confined to her bed and then, within two months of her "recovery," married to Horace Ansley in Florence (351).

Grace, for her part, has long been working with an imperfect mental model of what transpired in the past. Specifically, she had assumed all

[10] See Herman (2002: 9–22) for an account of "storyworlds" as mental models of who did what to and with whom, when, where, why, and in what fashion in the world to which interpreters relocate—or make a deictic shift—as they work to comprehend a narrative.

these years that Delphin, not his jealous fiancée, wrote the letter whose contents both women have memorized. Alida's revelation thus requires for Grace a painful readjustment in her understanding of the past, as noted by Phelan[11]:

> knowing about the forgery must alter her [Grace's] understanding of Delphin's role in their nighttime encounter. Rather than thinking of him as its only begetter, the active agent who brought it about, she must consider whether he was only an opportunist, someone willing to take advantage of a situation that others have set up for him. This consideration, in turn, must shake her confidence that Delphin actually loved her[12].

But the gaps in Alida's knowledge of past events are equally consequential. She did not know, until Grace and she have collaborated on constructing an account of what happened, that Grace took the initiative to *answer* the forged letter, thereby setting up the tryst at the Colosseum that did in fact occur. Further, Grace's co-narration reveals that Alida has been drastically mistaken about why Grace was married to Horace Ansley. Grace's final revelation in the story is that her daughter, Barbara, was born as a result of her sexual encounter with Delphin at the Colosseum (352).

It is therefore clear that Grace's own mother set up her already-pregnant daughter's marriage with Ansley as a strategy for saving familial face. Thus Alida could not be farther from the truth when, earlier in the story, she expresses her hypothesis that Grace "did it [i.e., married Horace] out of *pique*—to be able to say that you'd got ahead of Delphin and me" (351).

So much for a preliminary sketch of the situations and events revealed by the complex narrative transaction between Grace and Alida—a second-order narrative transaction that is the chief focus of the extradiegetic narrator's own account. The rest of my chapter works to provide a more fine-grained description of (the narrative relating) the structure and dynamics of the women's encounter. The sections that follow are meant to

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[11] [Forthcoming].

[12] This part of Phelan's account, which draws on "Roman Fever" to outline a rhetorical approach to narrative analysis, suggests important areas of overlap between theories of audience participation and the work on folk-psychological systems discussed in section 5 below. I am grateful to Jim Phelan for providing me with the typescript version of his essay. I am also grateful for his detailed and incisive comments on an earlier draft of this chapter. The comments caused me to modify—and I hope improve—the approach sketched here.

provide impetus for an interdisciplinary investigation into narrative viewed as a tool for thinking. Thus regrounded, narratology can explore how story artifacts like "Roman Fever" help constitute cognition-enabling or -enhancing systems or gestalts, which in turn both represent and vehiculate the distribution of intelligence in social as well as historical space.

## 3. "Roman Fever" as Narratively Organized System for Thinking

Wharton's story dramatizes one of the central problem-solving activities bound up with intelligent behavior, that is, gaining knowledge about non-proximate situations and events, including knowledge about events that occurred in the past and knowledge of one's own or another's mind. "Roman Fever" suggests that knowledge of this sort, rather than preceding and underwriting acts of narration or co-narration like those accomplished by Wharton's narrator and characters, instead derives from the larger gestalt formed by (interactions among) all of the components within such narrative systems. The gestalt at issue can be thought of as an emergent whole; it arises from the interplay of multiple participants (and in some cases, different incarnations of the same participant) occupying more than one diegetic level over the course of the story's telling. Further, this complex whole encompasses the mental activity of interpreters of the story. Readers participate in the formation of the gestalt; their interpretations are components of the intelligent system enabled by the narrative. Allowing a wide range of representational states to be propagated spatially as well as temporally, this richly differentiated structure is therefore both the record of and an instrument for socially distributed cognition[13]. Indeed, Wharton's text helps substantiate one of the fundamental insights of the Vygotskian tradition: namely, that "the notion of mental function can properly be applied to social as well as individual forms of activity"[14].

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[13] Here I build on Hutchins' (1995a) Vygotsky-inspired account of cognition as computation taken in a broad sense—such that the idea of "computation" is "as applicable to events that involve the interaction of humans with artifacts and with other humans as it is to events that are entirely internal to individual persons […] For our purposes, 'computation' will be taken […] to refer to the propagation of representational state[s] across representational media" (118).

[14] Wertsch (1991: 27).

My next three sections examine three facets of narrative structure contributing to the gestalt associated with “Roman Fever,” i.e., the system for thinking that is generated by (or emerges from) its design as well as its interpretation. At issue, first, are modes of perspective-taking in the story, and more specifically its use of a distributed structure of vantage-points involving shifts between character-external and character-internal types of focalization. Second, in section 5, I discuss how the text’s methods for representing consciousness bear on folk-psychological systems; in stories like Wharton’s, I argue, techniques for consciousness representation both support and derive from the native “theory of mind” in terms of which humans impute mental states and dispositions to their cohorts. The issue of focalization intersects that of consciousness representation, since internal or character-bound viewpoints by definition reflect (the narrator’s theory about) the perceptual-cognitive activity of the character who affords a vantage-point on events; and conversely, the recounting of, say, an act of introspection performed by a character involves events presented from that character’s vantage-point. But though these two narrative subsystems converge at certain points, they nonetheless constitute distinct representational resources organized by the narrative system as a whole[15]. Lastly, section 6 deals with sociocognitive implications of narrative embedding, or the insertion of second-order or “hypodiegetic” narratives within an initial narrative frame such as that established by Wharton’s primary narrator.

To anticipate: it is not just that narratives like “Roman Fever” must be (comprehended as) structured in systematic ways in order to be understood. More than this, narrative systems such as the one generated by

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[15] Even in instances of maximal convergence between these two subsystems, as in the case of internal focalization and what Cohn (1978) would term psychonarration, or the account of a character’s mental activity presented in the voice of the narrator, the subsystems are nevertheless orthogonal to one another, not coextensive. In the terms proposed by Herman (2002), whereas modes of perspective-taking constitute “macrodesign” principles, determining how many and what sorts of cues are globally available to interpreters as they work to reconstruct the storyworld(s) associated with a narrative, techniques for consciousness representation fall under the heading of narrative “microdesigns,” bearing on a more localized aspect of storyworld (re)construction—namely, the cuing and drawing of inferences about participant roles and relations. Palmer (2004), however, argues that inferences about the mental functioning of characters constitutes a necessary (and perhaps, on a strong reading, sufficient) condition for narrative understanding.

Wharton's text themselves afford crucial structure for human understanding. In other words, used as "psychological tools" in Vygotsky's sense of that term, story artifacts help constitute a larger functional gestalt[16]. Components of such narratively organized frameworks include, among other elements, various sorts of perspectival standpoints on the storyworld, embedding and embedded narrative levels, techniques for representing characters' mental activity, and readers' interpretations of all these ingredients. Each part of the system is a necessary though not a sufficient condition for the intelligence it generates. The gestalt itself is the sufficient condition for the intelligence afforded. Hence, the larger the array of components contained within and coordinated by the system, the wider its distributional reach—i.e., the "smarter" the system is. Futher, the intelligence of the system cannot be located in or reduced to any one of its components; rather, it is the combined product of all the participants, representational states, and environmental factors encompassed—that is to say, organized—by the system as a whole.

## 4. From Variable to Distributed Focalization

Originally proposed by Gérard Genette (1980) as an improvement over earlier terms of art (*point of view*, *perspective*, etc.), the term *focalization* is now widely used by narratologists to refer to perceptual and conceptual frames, more or less inclusive or restricted, through which situations and events are presented in a narrative. Genette drew a broad distinction between narratives that are internally focalized (where the viewpoint at issue is that of a participant in the storyworld) and narratives that are externally focalized (where the viewpoint is that of a more or less personalized narratorial agent surveying and relating but not participating in the narrated situations and events). Moreover, a given text can display fixed, variable, or multiple focalization. Respectively, one mode of perspective-taking can persist throughout, or there can be shifts of perspective, or one and the same set of events can be refracted through multiple (incommensurable) perspectives, as in *Rashomon* or Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying*.

"Roman Fever," with its shifts between character-external and –internal perspectives, would qualify as a variably focalized narrative in Genette's terms. Here, however, I propose to recategorize Wharton's text

[16] Cf. Hutchins (1995a), (1995b).

(and other variably or for that matter multiply focalized narratives) as exemplifying *distributed* focalization. This term is meant to imply how changes in perspective-taking are not merely incremental or additive, with one vantage-point giving way to another in sequence, but rather synergistically interrelated, constituting elements of a larger, narratively organized system for thinking. As "Roman Fever" unfolds, interpreters must track a number of shifts in perspective. Cumulatively, these shifts create a latticework of perceptual positions, a network of viewpoints, with emergent cognitive properties that cannot be reduced to those associated with any one position or node. The properties instead arise from the interaction between particular standpoints as the reading experience unfolds.

The opening paragraphs are marked by character-external focalization: from a viewpoint noncongruent with (and in effect containing or encompassing) that of the characters, we readers gaze at the characters gazing at what is around them. More precisely, we see both characters looking first at one another and then at their Roman surroundings from atop the restaurant terrace. Next, during what amounts to a narrative pause used for expositional purposes, the perspective-taking activity registered in the text (vis-à-vis the here and now of the initial storyworld) comes to a halt. Rather than prompting readers to gaze at (or through) the two women gazing at their surroundings, the text resorts to modes of consciousness representation to be discussed in my next section; at this point, "the two ladies, who had been intimate since childhood, reflected how little they knew each other" (344). Arguably, the narrative does not regain its forward momentum until the beginning of Part II[17].

As the second section begins, the narrator resumes the account of Alida's and Grace's encounter on the terrace, but there is a shift from a predominantly external to a predominantly internal mode of focalization of events situated in the here and now. More specifically, the story refracts situations and events largely through the perspective of Alida in particular, as in passages (i) and (ii):

[17] I therefore interpret the reference to the act of visualization in the final sentence of Part I as non-literal, i.e., as a reference to the process whereby past events are "visualized" or remembered by Alida and Grace. Here the narrator's metaphor of inverted telescopes licenses the inference that memory of the past has over-taken—diminished the relative prominence of—perception of the present: "these two ladies visualized each other, each through the wrong end of her little telescope" (346).

(i) [While sitting with Grace on the terrace, Alida's eyes ranged] "from the ruins which faced her to the long green hollow of the Forum, the fading glow of the church fronts beyond it, and the outlying immensity of the Colosseum" (347).

(ii) [Shortly thereafter, as Grace processes the information that Alida forged the letter] "Mrs Slade continued to look down on her. She [i.e., Grace] seemed physically reduced by the blow—as if, when she got up, the wind might scatter her like a puff of dust" (351).

The text does not register Grace's perspective on the women's interchange, though for one brief moment the narrative does cue readers to reconstruct a scene filtered through what must be assumed to be a blended or gestalt vantage-point, constituted by the perspectives of both women:

(iii) "The clear heaven overhead was emptied of all its gold. Dusk spread over it, abruptly darkening the Seven Hills. Here and there lights began to twinkle through the foliage at their feet. Steps were coming and going on the deserted terrace—waiters looking out of the doorway at the head of the stairs, then reappearing with trays and napkins and flasks of wine" (351).

Meanwhile, the conclusion of the story is marked by something of an ambiguity, rather than fusion, of perspectives. In (iv), the first three sentences quoted after the bracketed material relay events from what can be construed as an incipiently external perspective: Grace's turning toward the door of the terrace, taking a step, and then turning back to face "her companion" represent a sequence of behaviors that could be observed from the viewpoint of an onlooker. But the last sentence of (iv) returns readers to Alida's vantage-point. The locative phrase *ahead of* encodes a "projective" or viewer-relative position[18]: someone's moving ahead of someone else implies that he or she is moving into a position that appears as such to the person left behind:

(iv) [After Alida remarks that Grace "had nothing but that one letter that he [Delphin] didn't write" (352)] "Mrs Ansley was again silent. At length she turned toward the door of the terrace. She took a step, and turned back, facing her companion.
'I had Barbara,' she said, and began to move ahead of Mrs. Slade toward the stairway" (352).

The point I wish to stress here is that, insofar as they are both sequentially organized and socially distributed, these shifts in focalization par-

[18] Herman (2002: 280–82).

ticipate in a larger ecology of perspective-taking. The initial, externally focalized scene on the restaurant terrace functions like an establishing shot in a movie, serving to locate the storyworld participants in their surrounding environment. The switch to Alida's vantage-point in the second part anchors events (including the characters' own narrative transaction) in her perceptual experiences, thereby barring direct access to Grace's viewpoint on the unfolding situation (except for the fleeting moment of joint, performed-in-common perceptual activity evident in passage (iii) above). The return to external focalization, and then to Alida's bare glimpse of Grace's back as she moves ahead of her toward the stairway, frustrates readers' desire for a more intimate view of the demeanor of the two characters once Grace makes her surprising revelation about her daughter. Simply characterizing the story's focalization as variable fails to capture the way the variations in question help constitute a system for thinking. This system supports the adoption of particular kinds of viewpoints on the storyworld at particular moments in the unfolding of the narrative, i.e., a specific way of spreading or distributing representational states through time and (social) space.

Tables 1-3 schematize how the external and internal vantage-points are distributed in "Roman Fever." Table 1, which is a plain taxonomy of the modes of perspective-taking at work in the narrative, in effect corresponds to the structuralist phase of research on focalization. The grid indicates the presence or absence of modes of focalization; also, since more than one type is indicated, variation over the course of the narrative can be registered.

| External | Internal (Alida) | Internal (Grace) | Internal (Alida + Grace) |
|---|---|---|---|
| X | X | Ø | X |

Table 1. Inventory of Modes of Focalization in "Roman Fever"

By contrast, Tables 2 and 3 register the temporal as well as spatial distribution of vantage-points in the narrative. Factoring out many details that would need to be included in a fuller synopsis of the narrative, both Table 2 and 3 indicate when in the reader's experience of the narrative a particular vantage-point is deployed, with the numbers standing for the segments of the story discussed previously. To reiterate: segment 1 =

opening scene (initial "zoom in" on the characters on the terrace); segment 2 = series of events filtered through Alida's perspective; segment 3 = events co-focalized, briefly, by Alida and Grace; segment 4 = return to Alida's perspective; segment 5 = shift to external focalization ("zoom out") as the two women begin to leave the terrace; segment 6 = final, internally focalized image of Grace moving ahead of Alida toward the stairway.

| External | Internal (Alida) | Internal (Alida + Grace) |
|---|---|---|
| Segments 1, 5 | Segments 2, 4, 6 | Segment 3 |

Table 2. A Dynamic Representation of Shifts of Perspective in "Roman Fever"

Whereas Table 2 indicates the sequencing of variable perspectives, and suggests that the overall effect of the story arises from the interplay between vantage-points over time, Table 3 represents a broader matrix of perspective-taking possibilities together with the vantage-points actualized as the story unfolds. Table 3 thus better captures the status of "Roman Fever" as a narrative gestalt. Read vertically, the matrix shows the how possible and actual perspectives are distributed in a given "time-slice" of the storyworld; read horizontally, the matrix shows how, over time, the vantage-points selected are in turn distributed among the various agents of perceptual activity.

| | Segment | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| External | √ | * | * | * | √ | * |
| Internal (Alida) | * | √ | * | √ | * | √ |
| Internal (Grace) | * | * | * | * | * | * |
| Internal (Alida + Grace) | * | * | √ | * | * | * |

Table 3. A Matrix for Perspective-taking in "Roman Fever"

Read both by column and by row, the matrix suggests how vantage-points structurally possible but not selected nonetheless contribute to the

functioning of the narrative system. Overall, the cognitive "thumbprint" of the system can be discerned from the way it distributes representational states across some of the cells in Table 3, but not others—and that in a specific sequence.

Globally speaking, the system affords a particular way of coordinating viewpoints over time. The intial, quasi-panoramic scene provides a context in which the subsequent filtering of events through Alida's perspective carries a cognitive charge it would not otherwise possess. Specifically, of the two character-internal vantage-points that the opening establishes as structurally possible, only one manifests itself as the process of co-telling unfolds, deferring until the end of the story any knowledge of the full extent of Grace's involvement with Delphin. By propagating representational states in this order and with this pattern of distribution, the system delays the opportunity both for Alida and for readers to make a crucial (and necessarily retrospective) adjustment to the embedded storyworld—i.e., the mental representation of the past that emerges from the women's interchange.

In turn, by delaying the presentation of cues prompting this adjustment, i.e., by allowing Alida's erroneous assumptions about the past to leave their imprint on the narrative transaction until just before it concludes, the system compels both Alida and the reader to engage in a sudden, large-scale reconfiguration of the mental model evoked by the text until Grace makes her final revelation. The exclusion of Grace's perspective maximizes both the number of biased assumptions filtering events and the scope of the cognitive adjustment required once Alida's assumptions are revealed to be unfounded. Aside from its shock value and arresting force, then, the story's surprise ending underscores the extent to which knowledge is socially constituted; to generate knowledge of the past, Alida's vantage-point must be integrated into a larger system for distributing cognition temporally as well as socially. Reflexively, the story suggests that this system, a method for minimizing the likelihood of error, is itself narratively organized. Grace's delayed revelation thus dramatizes, both for Alida and for the reader viewing events from her vantage-point, how knowledge derives from problem-solving activities embedded in evolving contexts of social interaction—with narrative itself being one of the fundamental mechanisms by which such embedding is accomplished.

Hence the perspective associated with any given segment of Wharton's story generates cognitive properties defined, in part, by the perspectives previously adopted as well those to be actualized later during the

reading (or rereading) experience. It takes the coordinated operation of elements organized by the system—including the general predominance of internal over external focalization[19]—to convey this knowledge about the (temporally and spatially distributed) basis for knowledge itself. Equally, though, "Roman Fever" suggests how a particular vantage-point takes its character from the range of other available viewpoints that could have been deployed in a given story segment but were not.

As Table 3 indicates, in all of the segments (and transitions between segments) the ghostly pressure of Grace's never-adopted perspective on the women's unfolding interchange makes itself felt. To borrow a metaphor from linguistics, the non-occurrence of Grace's viewpoint impinges on the narrative system in much the same way that the non-occurrence of the feature of voicing impinges on other, actualized features of the phonological system of the English language. For instance, the non-occurrence of voicing enables a hearer to process the [p] sound in *pat*, thereby distinguishing it from the [b] sound in *bat*, although both [p] and [b] are bilabial stops when it comes to the place and manner of articulation. By analogy, whereas the "place" of focalization in "Roman Fever" is by intervals external and internal, the "manner" involves a distribution between external and internal views but not between two contrasting internal views.

Alternatively, if at some point in the story Grace's (individualized) vantage-point on the women's current narrative transaction had been represented, the narrative system would have generated quite different cognitive properties. Information about Grace's perspective could have been brought to bear, earlier in the transaction and thus sooner in the reading experience, on Alida's view of how the emerging narrative-within-the-narrative has affected Grace. Inversely, with each successive segment the non-representation of Grace's vantage-point—i.e., the non-selection of this possible but unactualized mode of perspective-taking—becomes more palpably salient. Hence the very wide scope of the cognitive repair mechanisms set into play by Grace's final revelation.

Thus, as this system for distributing perspectives operates in time, it generates knowledge about the temporal and social processes constituting knowledge itself. My next section explores additional identifying characteristics of "Roman Fever" construed as a narratively organized

[19] Statistically speaking, 66.6% (i.e., 4 out of 6) of the segments identified are internally focalized.

teristics of "Roman Fever" construed as a narratively organized system for thinking. Specifically, I focus on socio-cognitive implications of the story's use of techniques for representing consciousness.

## 5. Consciousness Representation, Folk Psychology, and Distributed Cognition

Insofar as they provide accounts of the experiences of characters in other times and other places, storytellers such as Wharton's can extend the focus of concern to situations, participants, and events beyond those that lie within an immediate sphere of interaction (including a reader's interaction with a text). In this sense, and to use Erving Goffman's (1974, 1981) term, stories can be characterized a fundamental resource for "laminating" experience—that is, a tool for embedding imagined or noncurrent scenarios within a current context of talk. Narrative thus affords a basis for various forms of imaginative projection, including those required for empathetic identification with others.

Indeed, by building on their understanding of the "social mind in action,"[20] i.e., by drawing on the same sociocognitive processes of attribution they use to make inferences about their own and others' unstated feelings, motives, and dispositions, readers of literary narrative have no trouble accepting the writer's premise that fictional minds can be dipped into, reported on, even quoted verbatim by a narrator with no greater-than-normal access to his or her own or other characters' inner experience[21]. Relevant in this context are basic, generic processes by which humans attribute mental properties both to themselves and to their social cohorts[22]. These processes are part of what psychologists refer to as the native "theory of mind" in terms of which people make sense of their own behavior and that of their conspecifics[23]; philosophers tend to refer to the

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20 Palmer (2002), (2003), (2004).

21 Cf. Cohn (1978).

22 The research of Alison Gopnik—Gopnik (1993), (1999); cf. Gopnik/Wellman (1992)—suggests the untenability of claims for first-person authority or "privileged access" when it comes to knowledge of the mind. In other words, there is evidence suggesting that people's knowledge of their own minds is just as theoretical as their knowledge of the minds of others.

23 Gopnik (1993), (1999); Gopnik/Wellman (1992).

same native inference-yielding resources as “folk psychology”[24]. Arguably, stories like Wharton’s not only reflect but also provide crucial resources for folk-psychological systems[25], there being a fundamental continuity between interpreting fictional minds and trying to make sense of our own and others’ reasons for doing and saying what is done and said in everyday interactions. At issue is people’s “common-sense” understanding of how thinking works, the rough-and-ready heuristics to which they resort in thinking about thinking itself. Such thinking about thinking—whereby people impute motives or goals to others’ behavior, evaluate the bases of their own conduct, and make predictions about future reactions to events—is by its very nature distributed across more than one mind, or at least more than one temporal phase of a given mind. Those engaged in comprehending narratives use the same heuristics when, without a second thought, they accord narrators the ability to report the inner experiences of characters. Conversely, narrative representations of consciousness help organize thinking about thinking. Story artifacts like Wharton’s, that is to say, help constitute a system for generating as well as identifying types of inferences about consciousness; for assessing their source, structure, and relative complexity; and for ascertaining their relationship with the more or less dominant folk-psychological theories shaping readers’ own interpretations of the text.

Wharton’s repertoire of techniques for representing consciousness affords a rich system for such distributing thinking about thinking. For one thing, the extradiegetic-heterodiegetic narrator provides reports of what the two characters say concerning their own and their interlocutor’s mental activities. As these speech reports suggest, Alida recruits from folk-psychological resources to build up a representation of Grace’s mind; indeed, both women use a theory of mind to reconstruct their own past (and present) mental dispositions, states, etc., vis-à-vis their current interaction as well as their roles as characters in the embedded or hypodiegetic narrative whose telling emerges from Alida’s and Grace’s encounter (see section 6 below). Further, the narrator’s own discourse draws on several modes of theory-formation when it comes to presenting the inner experiences of the characters (with a special focus, after the first part, on Alida’s inner experiences). As suggested by Cohn (1978), these modes can be

[24] Goldman (1993); Gordon (2001).
[25] Cf. Zunshine (forthcoming).

viewed as increments along a scale, ranging from relatively mediated to relatively unmediated access to characters' consciousness[26]. Drawing on Cohn's nomenclature, and offered as a preliminary basis for discussion, Figure 1 extends the scale to include narratorial reports of the characters' own consciousness-representing remarks: At one end of the scale are the narrator's reports of utterances in which the characters attribute mental states and dispositions to themselves and to one one another, or else comment on states and dispositions attested to by their interlocutor. Situated at the diegetic as well as the hypodiegetic levels of the narrative (see section 6 below), these reports show the characters drawing on folk-psychological systems to make sense of their own and their interlocutor's behavior in the present as well as the past. In terms of the scale presented

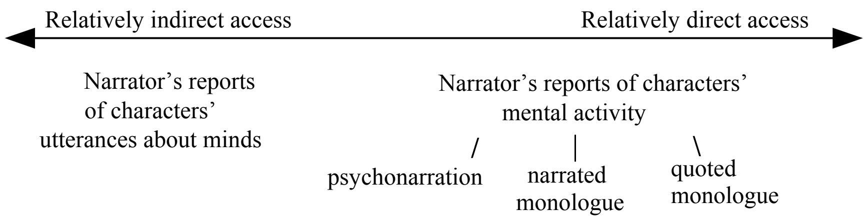



Figure 1. Modes of Consciousness Representation:
A Scale Based on Cohn's (1978) Taxonomy

in Figure 1, these reports provide (relatively) indirect access to the characters' minds, insofar as inferences about their consciousness need to be based on statements that derive from the characters' own inferences. As manifestations of the characters' own folk-psychological theorizing, the statements depend for their force and effect on readers' native theories of mind; but they also constitute narrative-enabled strategies for refining that theory, modelling fictional scenarios as a way of testing the theories'

[26] Palmer (2002), (2004) characterizes Cohn's influential approach to fictional consciousness as the paradigmatic instance of the "speech-category approach," with psychonarration, narrated monologue, and quoted monologue being more or less exact counterparts to the categories of indirect speech, free indirect discourse, and direct discourse. My thinking about consciousness representation has been informed by Palmer's path-breaking account of the limits as well as the possibilities of the speech-category approach.

goodness-of-fit with situations not yet encountered or actualized. Passages (v)-(x) illustrate:

(v) "'I never would have supposed you were sentimental, Alida'" [said by Grace to Alida when the latter asks: "'Do you suppose [our daughters are] as sentimental as we were?'"] (343).
(vi) "'Yes; you you're so prudent!'" [said by Alida to Grace after Grace tells her that she burnt the letter she thought Delphin had written to her] (350).
(vii) "'I horrify you'" [said by Alida to Grace after she reveals that she herself forged the letter] (350).
(viii) "'I cared for that memory'" [said by Grace in response to Alida's accusation that Grace still cares for Delphin] (351).
(ix) "'Yes. I suppose it would,' Mrs. Ansley assented" [said after Alida remarks: "'And your marrying so soon convinced me that you'd never really cared'"] (351).
(x) "'It's odd you never thought of it, if you wrote the letter'" [said by Grace after Alida remarks: "'I never thought of your answering…'"] (352).

The experience of interpreting passages such as these is nicely captured by Georges Poulet (1969), whose phenomenological approach deserves reconsideration from the perspective afforded by research on the theory of mind:

> Whatever I think is part of *my* mental world. And yet here I am thinking a thought which manifestly belongs to another mental world [...] since every thought must have a subject to think it, this *thought* which is alien to me and yet in me, must also have a *subject* which is alien to me [...] Whenever I read, I mentally pronounce an I, and yet the I which I pronounce is not myself (56; quoted in Iser 2000: 202).

But Wharton's extradiegetic-heterodiegetic narrator goes beyond reports of the characters' own folk-psychological statements. Moving rightward along the scale in Figure 1, the text features narratorial synopses of characters' thoughts, representations of consciousness in which Alida's mental characteristics impinge on the process of narration itself, and instances in which narration becomes "transparent," yielding what can be assumed to be more or less direct access to characters' mental language. These modes of consciousness representation bear differently than speech reports on the folk-psychological systems that they mediate, that is, reflect as well as enable. For example, at the opening of the story, the narrator details the characters' environment and provides an account of the mental activity being jointly performed by Alida and Grace. Passage (xi) is thus an instance of what Cohn (1978) would term psychonarration:

(xi) “they both relapsed upon the view, contemplating it in silence, with a sort of diffused serenity which might have been borrowed from the spring effulgence of the Roman skies” (343)[27].

Shortly after providing access to the women’s contemplative serenity, and having reported Alida’s at once self- and other-directed theory that as a widow “she felt her unemployment more than poor Grace ever would” (345), the narrator furnishes what would appear to be a moment of direct access to Grace’s mental language, i.e., an instance of quoted monologue. Even so, much of the report is hedged with the subjunctive mood, and presented as inescapably mediated through the process of narration itself:

(xii) “‘Alida Slade’s awfully brilliant; but not as brilliant as she thinks,’ would have summed it up [i.e., summed up Grace’s “mental portrait” of Alida]; though she would have added, for the enlightenment of strangers, that Mrs. Slade had been an extremely dashing girl [...]” (345).

(xii) thus suggests a mixed mode of consciousness representation, or rather a mode whose folk-psychological signature derives from the way it resists definitive placement toward the right pole of the continuum. It quotes Grace’s mind but also suggests that any such quotation must be viewed as an artifact of the way her story is told.

In the second part of the story, meanwhile, the narrator focuses on the mental activity of Alida. The resulting thought reports involve psycho-narration, as in (xiii) and the first sentence of (xiv). But they also encompass quoted monologue, or the direct representation of Alida’s mental language (as in the second sentence of xiv), as well as narrated monologue, or reports blending the narratorial voice with expressions of the character’s own mental activity (as in xv):

(xiii) “Mrs. Slade [...]was conscious of a strange sense of isolation, of being cut off from the warm current of human communion” (351).

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[27] Alternatively, passage (xi) might be construed as providing an externalized, relatively schematic report of the women’s contemplation, rather than a more internalized view of the sort associated with psychonarration, which standardly delves into the contents of characters’ thoughts. Or, in yet another interpretation, the passage might be read as the narrator’s report of the two characters’ *act* of contemplating the view, i.e., as an action-description instead of a thought report. For an account of the fuzziness of the boundaries between (reports of) physical and mental modes of behavior in storyworlds, see Palmer (2003).

(xiv) [After telling Grace that it was she herself who wrote the love letter] “It seemed to Mrs. Slade that a slow struggle was going on behind the voluntarily controlled mask of her [Grace’s] small quiet face. ‘I shouldn’t have thought she had herself so well in hand,’ Mrs. Slade reflected, almost resentfully” (350).

(xv) “Mrs. Slade’s jealousy suddenly leapt up again at the sight [of Grace]. All these years the woman had been living on that letter. How she must have loved him, to treasure the mere memory of its ashes! The letter of the man her friend was engaged to. Wasn’t it she [i.e., Grace, not Alida herself] who was the monster?” (351).

Although passages (xiii-xv) all focus on Alida’s mental behavior, it is important to note that much of Alida’s thinking concerns the nature and status of Grace’s own thinking. In consequence, the modes of consciousness representation that appear as relatively more direct in Figure 1 involve other types (and sources) of mediation that need to be brought within the scope of the study of narrative as a resource for distributed cognition[28]. For instance, the last part of (xv), embedded in the narrator’s folk-psychological account of Alida’s jealousy, itself embeds a theory of the workings of Grace’s mind. Hence this passage nests a character’s theory of another character’s mind within the narrator’s theory of the initial character’s mind. The same nested—that is to say, distributed—structure can be found in (xvi), which occurs near the beginning of the story as the two women sit on the terrace facing the immensity of the ancient ruins:

(xvi) “Mrs. Slade’s eyes rested on her with a deepened attention. ‘She can knit—in the face of this! How like her’” (347).

An even more complicated nesting of folk-psychological statements occurs in (xvii); here an additional layer is produced by a counterfactual statement about the theory of mind that might have been framed by a hypothetical observer of Grace’s behavior:

(xvii) “Mrs. Ansley had resumed her knitting. One might almost have imagined (if one had known her less well, Mrs. Slade reflected) that, for her also, too many memories rose from the lengthening shadows of those august ruins” (347).

In (xvii), the narrator presents a theory of Alida’s theory of what a hypothetical observer’s theory of Grace’s mind might have been, had the

[28] I would like to acknowledge my indebtedness, in the paragraphs that follow, to Lisa Zunshine’s (forthcoming) discussion of theories of mind vis-à-vis processes of narrative understanding.

observer known her less well than she, Alida. As Figure 2 indicates, when one factors into the system the reader's own interpretive activity, (xvii) can be construed as helping to generate a system for thinking that is at once multi-tiered and highly (i.e., recursively) structured:

| | |
|---|---|
| Level 1: | Grace's mind |
| Level 2: | The hypothetical observer's theory of Grace's mind |
| Level 3: | Alida's theory of the hypothetical observer's theory of Grace's mind |
| Level 4 | The narrator's theory of Alida's theory of the hypothetical observer's theory of Grace's mind |
| Level 5: | The reader's theory of the narrator's theory of Alida's theory of the hypothetical observer's theory of Grace's mind |

Figure 2. The Recursive Embedding of Folk-Psychological Theories in Passage (xvii)

Although Figure 2 shows Grace's mind as the lowest level of the system, it should be noted that this is a matter of representational convenience; the system does not actually terminate at that level. Rather, Grace's mind can be assumed to consist, in turn, of additional levels of theory-construction provisionally terminating at other points—e.g., at Grace's own mind at times $t_n \ldots t_{n-1}$, or at Grace's own theory about past or present phases of Alida's mind. Nor—as the present discussion itself indicates—does the system find its upper limit in a given reader's theory of the narrator's theory, etc. Rather, the recursive structure can be multiplied indefinitely in both directions, with narrative being both the means and the result of this propagation of folk-psychological theory-building. The result is that story artifacts like Wharton's take their place within a broader constellation of mind-oriented problem-solving activities, forming part of the basic mental equipment with which humans set about gaining knowledge or their own and others' mind.

To sum up: over the course of "Roman Fever," statements with folk-psychological relevance arise from different ways of presenting the activity of fictional minds. Further, to broach an issue treated more fully in my next section, these statements pertain to sources and kinds of mental activity situated at different levels of narration, extradigetic (where the primary narrator is located), diegetic (where the present-day Alida Slade and Grace Ansley are located), and hypodiegetic (where the earlier incarnations of the characters are located). The intelligence of the narrative system, i.e., its capacity to help us think about the (socially distributed) nature of thinking itself, is generated by the way it coordinates these sources of mental activity and organizes the representational states that they propagate. In short, Wharton's narratively organized system for thinking has emergent cognitive properties, arising

thinking has emergent cognitive properties, arising from the way representations are distributed between components of the system.

## 6. Framed Narratives as Intelligent Systems

In the here-and-now of the storyworld evoked by the narrator, the two main characters are visiting Rome in the company of their daughters, Barbara ("Babs") Ansley and Jenny Slade. During their encounter on the restaurant terrace the two women occupy spacetime coordinates predating those of the time of narration, but postdating those defining another, embedded storyworld co-constructed by the two women over the course of their interaction. In that other, second-order storyworld, the two characters figure as younger versions of themselves. These earlier incarnations of Alida and Grace are "experiencing-I's" involved in the situations and events that they jointly recount in their capacity as "narrating-I's"—i.e., intradiegetic narrators collaborating on the production of a story about what happened that night at the Colosseum some twenty-five years earlier. In turn, in any subsequent narratively structured representation of the women's encounter on the terrace, they would have to be construed (or portrayed) as experiencing-I's whose experience at the time of the encounter consists precisely in their being narrating-I's vis-à-vis their own experiences twenty-five years before the restaurant encounter. In this way, too, Wharton's text helps constitute a system for thinking that is at once multi-tiered and recursively structured. The system encompasses the extradiegetic-heterodiegetic narrator's strategies for representing events, the characters' attempts to make sense of events by assuming the role of intradiegetic-homodiegetic narrators, and readers' efforts to interpret the story artifact in light of the relationship it establishes between the narrator's and character-narrators' problem-solving activities. There are thus two ways in which the use of framed or embedded storytelling helps constitute "Roman Fever" as a narratively organized system for thinking. On the one hand, by telling about two characters co-creating a hypodiegetic narrative, Wharton's text provides an account of narrative itself as a fundamentally social (which is not to say harmonious or amicable) way of making sense of the world[29]. On the other hand, the stratification of the

[29] Early on in the story Mrs. Slade engages in what would seem to be a private, non-collaborative "prophetic flight" (348) of her own, i.e., an embedded prospective narra-

storyworld into levels produces a narrative gestalt smarter than the sum of its parts. This gestalt, structuring the problem-solving activities of readers as well as of the narrator and character-narrators, functions as a system for generating historical intelligence (i.e., knowledge about the past) in particular.

In the first place, Alida's and Grace's co-construction of a story about past events organizes their ongoing interaction, constituting a basis for distributing speech productions, cognitive representations, and even bodily stances and movements in the storyworld evoked by the initial narrative frame. Drawing on discourse strategies that Norrick (2000: 126–33, 154–63) has shown to be typical for informal, conversational co-narration of stories that are at least partially shared (that is, known) by interlocutors, Alida begins the collaborative telling by voicing questions that also function as story abstracts, in Labov's (1972) sense:

(xviii) "'Lovers met there [i.e., at the Colosseum] who couldn't meet elsewhere. You knew that?'" (349).

(xix) "'You don't remember? You don't remember going to visit some ruins or another one evening, just after dark, and catching a bad chill?'" (349).

These questions set up the discourse context in which Alida reveals that she forged the letter supposedly written by Delphin, triggering Grace's fact-checking question: "'You wrote it?'" (350). The basis for co-telling is thereby created; taking on the dual status of characters and (intradiegetic) narrators, the two women jointly refer to events situated at the hypodiegetic level occupied by a Delphin Slade, whose affections seem to have been divided between their younger selves.

(xx) "'Yes; I [i.e., Alida] wrote it! But I was the girl he was engaged to. Did you happen to remember that?'

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tive about Grace's hypothetical future. But this narrative, too, involves socially distributed cognition, given its reliance on folk-psychological schemata of the sort discussed in my previous section:

"What was there for her [Grace] to worry about? She [Grace] knew that Babs would almost certainly come back engaged to the extremely eligible Campolieri. 'And she'll sell the New York house, and settle down near them in Rome, and never be in their way...she's much too tactful. But she'll have an excellent cook, and just the right people in for bridge and cocktails...and a perfectly peaceful old age among her grandchildren'" (347–48).

> Mrs. Ansley's head drooped again. 'I'm not trying to excuse myself...I remembered...'
> 'And still you went?'
> 'Still I went.'" (350)

From this point on, the two women's engage in a dialectic of co-narration, a process whereby they bring into surprising, sometimes violent confrontation with one another two partly overlapping but incongruent sets of mental representations—that is, the embedded or second-order storyworlds in terms of which each character has come to understand the past. Knowledge of what happened emerges from the interaction between these component storyworlds. From their cross-comparison—a cross-comparison orchestrated by way of the first-order narrative, which tells the story of Alida's and Grace's own narrative transaction—arise cognitive properties not reducible to any of these storyworlds taken in isolation. However, it is not just by telling about a transaction of co-telling that "Roman Fever" affords a narratively organized system for thinking about the past. Beyond this, the text's stratification into narrative levels itself provides the means for distributing historical intelligence[30]. A framed tale like Wharton's participates, by virtue of its narrative structure, in a cognition-enabling or -supporting system that includes at least the following components:

(a) the representational medium selected for narration;
(b) the teller of the framing tale;
(c) the teller(s) of the framed tale;
(d,e) the interlocutors (if any) to whom both the framing and framed stories are represented as being told;
(f) the situations and events told about in the framing narrative;
(g) the situations and events that make up the framed narrative;
(h) interpreters of the gestalt formed by components (a-g) plus their own intepretation of those components; and
(i) the author whose initial act of composition set into motion the chain of events leading to the formation of the gestalt[31].

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[30] Herman (under review) provides a fuller account of narrative embedding as a resource for historical intelligence.

[31] The following values can be assigned to variables a-g: a = print narrative; b = Wharton's extradiegetic-heterodiegetic narrator; c = Alida Slade and Grace Ansley; d = the extradiegetic narratee addressed by Wharton's narrator; e = by turns, Alida and Grace; f = Alida's and Grace's narrative transaction; g = events pertaining to Grace's tryst with Delphin.

This entire structure yields opportunities for distributing cognition not provided by other, less differentiated kinds of story artifacts. In a story that does not involve narrative embedding, components (c), (e), and (g) will be absent, and the gestalt formed by *the relation among* these components and the other, remaining components (including readers or interpreters) will be affected. The result will be a net decrease in the capacity of the system to spread or propagate representations originating from sources potentially quite widely separated in space and time. In short, narrative embedding increases the distributional reach of stories used as a tool for thinking, with framed tales enhancing the overall intelligence of the system or gestalt to which they contribute. Exploiting properties associated with the representational medium or component (a), the first narrator's use of past-tense narration situates the present moment of telling on a temporal continuum one of whose increments is the (earlier) time-frame of Alida's and Grace's encounter on the terrace. In turn, by adopting the role of intradiegetic (co-)narrators, and using past-tense narration in their own right, the two characters' narrative transaction enables components (c) and (g) of the system to be coordinated in parallel with the system's coordination of (b) and (f). To put the same point another way, the system of embedding is modularized and easily extendable; incremental divisions of the stream of time can be multiplied and annexed to one another, in end-to-end fashion. The system thereby allows for a kind of telescopic magnification of situations and events more or less distant from the present. Further, insofar as Alida and Grace alternate between the roles of teller and listener (with each following the path c→e→c a number of times over the course of their transaction), the system allows for a sort of ongoing calibration of the fit between components (g) and (f), i.e., a moment-by-moment determination of which subcomponents of (g) need to be slotted into (f). Indeed, insofar as it recounts the characters' collaboration on and fine-tuning of a shared story about the past, "Roman Fever" suggests how narrative mediates or enables an interpenetration of past and

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Further, some theorists of narrative would identify additional components within this complex whole. Booth (1983), for example, would subdivide component (i) by distinguishing between the flesh-and-blood or biographical author and the implied author. Meanwhile, Rabinowitz (1977) argues for the need to subdivide component (h), examining the different kinds of audiences in which readers must participate (during the reading experience) to comprehend narratives in all their richness and complexity. See Phelan (forthcoming) for other relevant discriminations in this context.

present, with past events shaping the women's current interchange, but with that very interchange also remolding the contours of the (assumed) past.

To extrapolate from Wharton's story: with each successive insertion of a framed narrative into the diegetic (or hypodiegetic, or hypo-hypodiegetic) frame that embeds it, the distributed structure that results furnishes information about events more and more widely separated in time from those occurring within the outermost time-frame, i.e., the present moment of the initial frame. In other words, the more distributed the structure of framing, the more intelligence the system affords when it comes to gaining knowledge about the past on the basis of partial (and diminishing) evidence in the present. Knowledge of previous situations and events, furthermore, cannot be localized in any one component of the system. Rather, historical cognition amounts to a stratified complex of stories networked together to link the present with the past—or, more precisely, to integrate the present moment into a constellation of more or less proximate past moments.

## 7. Directions for Future Research

Working toward an integrative, cross-disciplinary approach to the study of narrative, the present chapter has only begun to explore what makes stories integral to intelligent behavior. For researchers to pursue this line of investigation further, a new paradigm for narrative analysis needs to be developed. Specifically, the theory of narrative should be grounded not in (the semiotic system supporting) story artifacts *per se*, but rather in the way narratives participate in larger, socially embedded systems for thinking, which can enable problem-solving activities in particularized settings. Stories can thus be redescribed as distributed structures spreading the burden of thought, i.e., lightening the representational load that needs to be borne by any one component of the gestalt. To extend the model sketched here, then, researchers need to work toward a triangulation of three major profiles under which narrative can be viewed: as a semiotic structure, as a cognitive resource, and as an artifact both shaping and shaped by social conditions and processes. At issue is a program for research that incorporates structuralist, cognitive, and contextualist approaches to narrative analysis but yields new insights through their very combination. In this endeavor, Vygotsky's sociocultural approach to cognition, his suggestion that intelligence is mediated by sign-systems and

other psychological (as well as material) tools or artifacts, provides direction for future study. An essential resource for thought, systems of signs are, as Saussure (1959) also recognized, socially constituted and propagated, being embedded in social groups and instantiated in social encounters (acts of *la parole*). Viewed in this Vygotskian-Saussurean light, the project of regrounding narratology can be seen as an effort to understand how people weave tapestries of story by relying on abilities they possess as simultaneously language-using, thinking, and social beings. Or, to put the same point another way, a truly cross-disciplinary approach to stories may help reveal the extent to which intelligence itself is rooted in narrative ways of knowing, interacting, and communicating.

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# Narrative Cartography: Toward a Visual Narratology

Through its object, origin, and epistemological status narratology entertains special affinities with language. The facts listed below could be invoked in support of this view:

- Most narratives are verbal artifacts.
- Narratology is a brainchild of structuralism, a movement which defined its program as the application of linguistic models to all areas of signification.
- Language, arguably the only semiotic code besides the formal languages of logic and mathematics that allows predication[1] and the formulation of general laws, is the privileged medium of scholarship and scientific investigation.

None of these arguments presents however a valid reason for limiting narratology to analyses performed through verbal discourse. The following observations relativize the above statements:

- While the narrative power of language may be unequalled, narrative meaning can be fully or partially evoked by signs of many different media: language, painting, film, mime, music, digital simulations, and multi-media works involving many sensory channels or semiotic codes.
- The linguistic sign, far from constituting the fundamental modes of signification, is only one type of sign among others. Whereas

1 As suggested by Worth (1981).

Saussure-inspired semiology placed it at the center of any semiotic investigation, Peircean semiotics recognizes several types of signs of equal importance: icons, indices and symbols.

- Even though the vast majority of narratives are verbal, there is no compelling ground for limiting their theorization to a discourse of the same medium or semiotic system. While painting, music and cinema have been described in language, linguistics, the science of language, has made heavy use of visual tools, such as tables and diagrams. So do most of the disciplines of the social sciences.

Narratology has duly followed this trend. Even though narratologists of the structuralist generation regarded language as the only semiotic code capable of translating all other types of meaning, they frequently resorted to diagrams in their analyses of narrative structures. The most famous of these visual aids are Lévi-Strauss' arrangement of the themes of myth in a table that showed both chronological sequence and spatial thematic relations[2], Greimas' semiotic square, and Bremond's diagramming of narrative logic in terms of decision trees[3]. Visual tools were spurned by post-structuralism (i.e. deconstruction) for their tendency to freeze the fluidity of meaning, as well as for their objectivist and positivist connotations: aren't diagrams symptomatic of a scientific ambition? But recent developments in computer technology and in cognitive science should ensure their return to favor. By offering powerful graphic and duplication tools, the computer has accelerated the tendency of twentieth century culture to invest its contents in images rather than words. Meanwhile, cognitive science has challenged the structuralist belief that all thinking is strictly regulated by the categories through which language carves the alleged continuum of experience. The brain is now regarded as a specialized organ, with both left and right hemisphere faculties, and intelligence is conceived as a diversified phenomenon that draws in variable proportion—depending on the individual—on the different parts of the brain. It follows that thinking may take many forms (verbal, visual, musical) and favor either spatial or temporal dimensions. Some mathematicians are now pushing for the acceptance of visual diagrams as proofs (whereas traditional mathematics accepted only linear sequences of propositions formu-

[2] Lévi-Strauss (1958).
[3] Bremond (1973).

lated in logical notation)[4], and cognitive scientists argue that the memorization of narrative involves picture-like mental images as well as information stored in propositional form[5]. All these phenomena speak in favor of a narratology that includes both a visual and a verbal component.

Visual narratology should by no means be limited to the design of diagrams. As I envision it, the project encompasses two complementary territories: not only the graphic description of narrative features, whatever types of signs are used to implement these features, but also the verbal description of the visual dimensions of narrative, such as its use of graphic design as expressive device, or the integration of image and text. By focussing on the multiple relations between maps and narrative, the present essay explores a topic that cuts across both of these territories. Maps can indeed be drawn to analyze certain aspects of narrative texts, but they can also form an integral part of the text.

The association of the concepts of map and narrative presupposes that we expand the widely accepted definition of narrative as the expression of the *temporal* nature of human experience[6] into a type of meaning that involves the four dimensions of a space-time continuum. The temporal dimension of narrative does not manifest itself in pure form, as it does in music, but conjunction with a spatial environment. The reader's mind would be unable to imagine narrative events without relating them to participants, and without situating these participants in a concrete setting. The cognitive processing of narrative thus involves the creation of the mental image of a narrative world, an activity which requires the mapping of the salient features of this world. But the relation of narrative and maps is not limited to the formation of purely mental images: the present study will be devoted to the design and use of concrete visual maps.

To start this investigation on solid ground let me offer this definition: a map is a visualization of spatial data; its purpose is to help users understand spatial relationships. In order to be applicable to narrative, then, the notion of map presupposes a spatial dimension of texts. This spatial dimension can take the following forms:

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[4] See for instance Rotman (1995).
[5] For a review of these proposals, see Esrock (1994).
[6] Ricoeur (1983: 17).

- The actual space, or geographical context in which the text is produced, or to which the text refers. The mapping of this space is a matter of literary historiography.
- The space signified by the text. By this I mean the geographical, or topographic organization of the textual world, whether this world is real or fictional.
- The “spatial form” of the text, a term coined in the forties by the critic Joseph Frank[7] to describe the metaphorical space constituted by the network of internal correspondences that links the themes, images, or sounds of the text.
- The virtual space navigated by readers, as they move through the text. This space is implied by the reading protocol inherent to the text. In branching texts and textual databases the virtual space is a two-dimensional network of possible routes; in non-branching texts, such as traditional novels, it collapses into a line.
- If we follow the usage of the word map in cognitive science, we can extend the concept to the graphic representation of only partly spatial phenomena, such as narrative plots. As suggested above, a plot is indeed a series of events that take place in a space-time continuum.
- The space physically occupied by the text, such as the codex format and the graphic design of the pages for texts materialized as books.

In addition to the type of space which they cover, narrative maps can be classified according to their relation to the text: internal, external, or half way in-between. An internal map is designed by an author or illustrator as part of the interface between the text and the reader. It is therefore an integral component of the reading experience. An external map, on the other hand, is a diagram designed by readers (mostly by those who have to write or lecture about the text) as a heuristic tool. External maps are usually drawn by critics to overcome the limitations of the traditionally verbal language of their field. In rare cases, they can also be drawn by the authors themselves as an aide to the imagination during the writing process, or as a reading of their own work. The cross-classification of the various types of space with the two types of relation to the text yields the

7 Frank (1945).

table of figure 1. The remaining of this essay will be devoted to the illustration of its various categories.

| Type of space | Intra-textual | Extra-textual |
|---|---|---|
| Real world geography (external space) | — | + |
| Space of textual world | + | + |
| Text-Space (Hypertext) | + | — (?) |
| Spatial form of text | — (?) | + |
| History of textual world (plot) | — (?) | + |

Figure 1: Relations between text and maps

## 1. Maps of geographical context

These maps are drawn by literary historians to show how literary texts are anchored in actual geography. Since the focus is on the nurturing role of the real world in the production of literary texts, not on the textual world *per se*, they consist of marks drawn by the historian on preexisting geographic maps. A good source of this type of map is *The Atlas of Literature*, edited by Malcolm Bradbury[8], or Franco Moretti's *Atlas of the European Novel, 1800-1900*[9] (though Moretti's book presents other types as well). Here are two examples of the phenomena which are mapped in these books:

(a) Cultural landscapes. A map in the *Atlas of Literature* indicates the sites of literary activity on the street map of central Vienna in the

[8] Bradbury (1998).
[9] Moretti (1998).

early twentieth century. Shown on the map are the locations of the houses of famous figures (Freud on the Berggasse; Stefan Zweig on the Kochstrasse), as well their favorite meeting places: the Café Central, frequented by Robert Musil and Leon Trotsky; or the Café Griensteidl, frequented by Hermann Bahr, Arthur Schnitzler, Hugo von Hofmannsthal, Sigmund Freud and Karl Kraus.

(b) Geographic location of plots. One map in Moretti's atlas traces the itineraries of the heroes of 16th century picaresque novels, such as *Don Quixote*, *Lazarillo de Tormes*, and *La Picara Justina*[10]. The locations identified on the map are all real-world towns: Madrid, Toledo, Seville, and the route of pilgrimages to Santiago de Compostela. Another of Moretti's diagrams locates the beginnings and endings of the plots of several of Jane Austen's novels on the map of England. This type of map represents both the fictional world and the real world; but the focus is on the intertextual space of several novels, rather than on any particular fictional world. The absence of place-names specific to the novels suggests that the primary goal of the cartographer is to show how literary works represent Spanish or English geography, rather than to illustrate how Spanish or English geography is integrated into textual worlds.

## 2. Maps of the textual world

Maps of the textual world, by far the most numerous of the classes discussed in this essay, come in several forms: designed by the author as part of the interface of the text; created by a commissioned illustrator; added by editors; spontaneously drawn by readers, or produced by critics in support of their interpretations.

### 2.1 Internal maps: Michel Butor's *L'emploi du temps*

*L'emploi du temps* is one of those novels of which critics write: the main character is the setting. In this case the setting is the fictional English in-

[10] See figure 7 for a partial reproduction.

dustrial town of Bleston, an imaginary counterpart of Manchester. More precisely, the novel is about the struggle of Jacques Revel, a young Frenchman who spends a year in Bleston, to defeat the monster impersonated by the city itself. He tries to do so by conquering the labyrinth of the city and by investigating an enigma, but he eventually finds out, in typical postmodern fashion, that the only way to defeat the many-headed monster of Bleston is through the writing act itself.

One of the pervasive themes of the book is a sense of running in circles in the maze of Bleston's streets, and one of Revel's weapons in his fight against Bleston is a street map of the city, which is reproduced at the beginning of the novel. The map fulfills a double role: it is both a textual referent, and a guide to the plot; it functions on the intra-diegetic as well as on the extra-diegetic level. In both roles however it is intra-textual, since it is physically included in the novel. As an object in the fictional world, the map is sold to Revel by a young woman who is later assimilated to the Ariadne of Greek mythology, while Revel identifies with Theseus, the conqueror of the labyrinth. In the myth, the tread given by Ariadne to Theseus helps the hero escape from the labyrinth. On the intra-diegetic level, the map thus helps Revel find his way in Bleston and locate allies (mostly artworks) in his fight against the city. On the extra-diegetic level, it provides assistance to the reader who wishes to follow the movements of Revel through the city. An important dimension of attending to a narrative is the mental simulation of the travel of characters through the fictional world. As characters move from location to location, the reader's imagination accompanies them in their peregrinations, visualizing the setting that surrounds them, and updating this setting according to their progression.

Mentally simulating movement means that if a character is at point (a), the reader will imagine the objects that define location (a); if the same character moves to point (b), the furniture of setting of (b) will become present to the imagination. Literary purists may object that the text should be able to create the map in the reader's mind without visual aid; and furthermore that the availability of a visible map prevents the reader from sharing the early experience of Revel: rather than feeling lost with the hero in the early chapters, the reader knows exactly, at every moment in the plot, where Revel is located with respect to the major landmarks of Bleston. At the end of the novel, however, Revel has learned to navigate the town very efficiently. Would the reader's imagination be able to accompany him without the map?

Because of the linear nature of language, it is very difficult for a text left by itself to convey a sense of spatial relations. Objects can only be shown one at a time, and the reader needs to retrieve other items from memory to grasp their spatial arrangement. Moreover, the construction of the semantic universe of a novel involves much more than the visualization of the setting; it covers symbolic meaning, metaphorical relations, causal networks, and textual architecture. In *l'emploi du temps* this architecture is particularly complex. The novel is presented as a diary written by Revel during his year in Bleston, and the order of entries in the diary follows the structure of "a canonic fugue with five voices and two inversions" (Butor's own description)[11]. Could it be that by giving away the keys to the spatial layout—thereby facilitating immersion in the textual world—Butor is trying to alleviate the cognitive burden placed on the reader, mindful of the amount of mental energy that will be needed to apprehend the semantic texture of the novel in its full complexity? This gesture of user-friendliness is rare in the French New Novel; Robbe-Grillet, by contrast, has no qualms about letting the reader struggle inside labyrinths made purely of language.

### 2.2 Internalized external maps

Perhaps the best-known example of the internalization of an external map is the case of Dante's *Divine Comedy*[12]. From the Renaissance on, the work of Dante has inspired a rich tradition of literary cartography. When these maps are included in the text itself, as is the case with the Oxford edition of the *Divine Comedy*, they become for the reader authoritative guides to the textual world, and they function as what Kendall Walton would call a "prop in a game of make-believe"[13]. What makes the world of Dante so appealing to literary cartographers is the explicitly symbolic character of its geography. Margaret Wertheim wittily compares Dante's cosmological scheme to a "a great metaphysical onion."[14] Hell, Purgatory and Paradise are all structured as a series of concentric circles, labeled with specific sins or virtues, and leading deeper into depravity or higher into grace. Through this coupling of topographical areas with allegorical

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[11] "Une fugue canonique à cinq voix et à double inversion." Quoted by Alter (1972: 42).
[12] Dante (1996).
[13] Walton (1990).
[14] Wertheim (1999: 54).

meaning, the maps of the Divine Comedy combine "objective" spatial representation of the textual world with symbolic interpretation. This spiritual reading of space upholds the tradition of the Mappa Mundi of the Middle Ages. As Jürgen Schulz observes, in the Middle Ages and Renaissance:

> maps as often as not [...] served a didactic rather than a reporting function. Alongside the value-free maps drawn by medieval surveyor, architects, and illustrators of factual texts—maps that we may call technical maps to distinguish them from the others—there had been produced, chiefly by artists, a mass of ideal maps, maps that were not an end in itself but vehicles for higher ideas. They illustrate religious verities, moral and political conceits[15].

In their representation of the cosmos as centered on the earth, which itself was traditionally centered on Jerusalem and on the Cross[16], the maps of the *Divine Comedy* not only perpetuate the tradition of mystical mapmaking, they also resurrect, for the modern reader, a view of the universe to which Galileo was to deal a lethal blow.

My second example of interiorized external map represents an entirely different case: a map conceived independenly of any text that gives birth to a novel and becomes part of the text. The chart of Treasure Island in Robert Louis Stevenson's novel by the same title pays tribute to the unique power of maps to inspire the imagination. Nowadays the map is reproduced in every edition of *Treasure Island* as an integral part of the text, but it started as a painting that the author created to entertain himself during a summer in Scotland, at a time when the story hadn't yet started to take shape in his mind. In the appendix to *Treasure Island* Stevenson explains that the map does not illustrate the novel, rather, it is the novel that grew out of the map:

> The shape of [the island] took my fancy beyond expression; it contained harbours that pleased me like sonnets; and with the unconsciousness of the predestined, I ticketed my performance 'Treasure Island' [...] Somewhat in this way, as I pored upon my map of 'Treasure Island,' the future characters of the book began to appear there visibly

[15] Schulz (1987: 111).

[16] The most eloquent visual expression of this spiritual centering is the so called T-O pattern of medieval maps, in which the arms of a central body of water shaped like a cross (T) span the world (O) and divide it into three continents. The point where the two branches intersect stands for Jerusalem.

> among imaginary woods [...]. The next thing I knew, I had some paper before me and was writing a list of chapters.[17]

Stevenson praises the map for protecting him from embarrassing inconsistencies during the writing of the novel—such as making the sun set in the east—but the role of the map in the creative process extends far beyond the preservation of coherence: "The tale has a root [in the map], it grows in that soil; it has a spine of its own behind the words"[18].

### 2.3 External maps

As part of the reading process, many people draw sketches of the textual world to deepen their understanding of the text and to help themselves develop personal interpretations. Vladimir Nabokov, for instance, could not separate the act of reading from the act of drawing[19]. His private notebooks sketch whatever is sketchable in a literary text: the exact layout of the room of Gregor Samsa in Kafka's *Die Verwandlung*, the wanderings of Leopold Bloom and Stephen Daedalus in the streets of Dublin in James Joyce's *Ulysses*, and the location of the novels of Jane Austen and Charles Dickens on the map of England.

This activity of drawing maps of imaginary textual worlds is not limited to authors, teachers and critics. As figure 2 demonstrates, it is also practiced by "ordinary" readers. A genuine found object, this document blew one day into my garden as a piece of trash. I picked it up and was going to throw it away, when I noticed that it was a map of *The Great Gatsby*[20], probably drawn by a high-school student in preparation for a paper or an oral presentation. Or it may have been class-notes, and the map was copied from a diagram drawn by the teacher on the board. I offer this map as an example of the visualizing activity that goes on in the reader's mind as part of the reading process. In this case the reader's cognitive map of the textual world was translated into graphical form, but in most cases cognitive maps remain purely mental images. The sketch reveals an approximative knowledge of the geography of Long Island, where the novel takes place, but its point is to capture the symbolism of the

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[17] Stevenson (2001: 190).
[18] Stevenson (2001: 194).
[19] Nabokov (1980).
[20] Fitzgerald (1991).

the spatial relationship between the two main characters, Gatsby and Daisy. Their residence on opposite ends of a bay, West Egg and East Egg, stands for the separating effect of their social status: Daisy is a rich girl who marries old money, Gatsby is a *nouveau riche* whose wealth comes from suspect sources. From his waterfront mansion, Gatsby can observe Daisy across the bay, an activity which bridges space and expresses his enduring passion for her. In contrast to Gatsby and Daisy, the narrator Nick Carraway occupies an unspecified location on the open sea that reflects his nomadic role of mediator between Daisy (his cousin) and

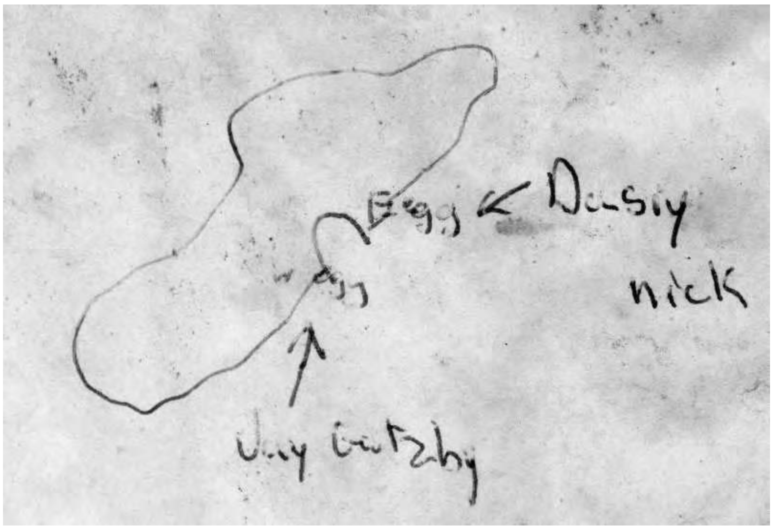



Figure 2: A spontaneous reader's map for *The Great Gatsby*

Gatsby (his friend). The sketch is as interesting for what it ignores as for what it shows: by focusing on the Daisy-Gatsby relationship on Long Island, rather than on the Myrtle-Tom affair in New York City, or on the characters' movements between Long Island and New York, it highlights what the reader perceives as the main theme of the novel. In my own mental map I construct the same spatial relationship between the two protagonists, but I place the characters on the Western shore of Long Island, while this reader places them on the Eastern shore. But a purely mental representation of the textual world may have left the exact location of the Eggs unspecified.

Though I endorse Wolfgang's Iser claim that the reader's concretization of literary texts involves a filling in of blanks[21], I also believe that this filling in is never complete nor systematic. The "texture" of the text, as Dolezel[22] has shown, and its degree of informational saturation, orient the activity of filling in toward certain areas at the detriment of others. Moreover, some readers are "visualizers,"[23] and they will imagine settings, objects and characters in great details, while others are satisfied with schematic mental images. We may thus picture Gatsby's house or Gatsby's clothes without picturing Gatsby's face; and we may picture Gatsby's house and its spatial location with respect to Daisy's without locating this image on one specific shore of Long Island. As we put our mental representations on paper, however, we are forced to draw a more specific picture, since drawings share the intolerance of movies for unspecified visual features (though of course to a lesser point): just as cinematic shots do not permit characters with unspecified facial features[24], drawings do not allow free-floating objects. Everything has to be located *somewhere* on the sheet of paper. But the maps spontaneously drawn by readers are not merely trans-positions of cognitive maps; they are also heuristic tools that shape the mental image they are supposed to represent. It is therefore reasonable to assume that the act of drawing figure 2 will fix the location of the Eggs in the reader's mind, and produces a new cognitive map.

Let me conclude this section with a type of extra-textual map that fulfills an entirely different function: not instruments of discovery, nor navigational aide, but props in a meta-textual game of make-believe. Rather than being played between author and reader, as is the case in fiction, this game is addressed to the reader by the literary scholar. In the *Dictionary of Imaginary Places*[25], Alberto Manguel and Gianni Guadalupi reveal themselves to be compulsive map-makers. Their book consists of detailed ethnographic and geographic descriptions of over 1200 lands and islands invented by storytellers. Many of these reports are accompanied by maps.

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[21] Iser (1980).
[22] Dolezel (1998).
[23] As Nell (1988) calls them in *Lost in a Book*. Nell's study shows that there is great variance among readers in the degree to which they form mental images of texts.
[24] As Seymour Chatman has shown in Chatman (1990).
[25] Manguel/Guadalupi (2000).

The reliance of the illustrator on textual information reminds us of the mode of operation of medieval cartographers, who depended on the tales of travelers to stretch their maps beyond the limits of the known world. In their cartographic euphoria, Manguel and Guadalupi not only provide maps for mapless texts (*Alice in Wonderland, Robinson Crusoe*), they go as far as offering new, technically more perfect versions of classic literary maps, such as the chart drawn by Robert Louis Stevenson for *Treasure Island* or the geographic illustrations that appear in the original edition of *Gulliver's Travels*. In so doing they suggests that the mapping of fictional worlds can be constantly improved by new technologies, as is the case with the mapping of the real world. Through their technical perfection and their uniformity, which lies at the antipodes of the sloppy sketches discussed above, the maps of the *Dictionary* create a reality effect which reinforces the appearance of objectivity of the ethnographic and geographic descriptions of imaginary places. They enlist the complicity of the reader in the scholarly game played by Manguel and Guadalupi, a game that regards literary authors as explorers of a world still partially unknown, and their fictional creations as newly discovered territories in real geography[26].

## 3. Maps of textual space, or database maps

Whereas maps of the textual world guide the imagination in a mimetically represented geography, maps of textual space are supposed to help readers find their way through the signifiers themselves. With a standard novel this process of navigation is not problematic: since narratives are organized linearly, all the reader needs to do is turn the pages to let the story unfold. To get to a point in the text it is necessary to read all the preceding pages. This reading protocol is known in computer science as sequential access. But some texts are not meant to be read sequentially at all; dictionaries and encyclopedias are consulted according to what computer jargon calls "random access." Still other texts are meant for both types of access; a standard scholarly book will for instance include a table

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[26] *Gulliver's Travels* plays the same game on the textual level: the map of Brobningag, for instance, describes it as a peninsula off the coast of "North America" discovered in 1703. Manguel and Guadalupi anchor the peninsula even more solidly in the real: their map locates Brobningag of the coast of "California, U.S.A."

of content, which displays the work's sequential organization; and an index, which allows readers to jump right away to a certain topic. The table of contents and the index can be compared to two types of charts used in maritime navigation. In the early days of seafaring, before the development of elaborate compasses allowed sailors to venture safely on the open sea, the principal navigational tool was the portolan chart. As Lloyd A. Brown describes it, "the portolan chart [...] was a coastal chart conceived by seafaring men and based strictly on experience with the local scene, that is, with the coasts and harbors actually used by navigators to get from one place to another."[27] A sailor using a portolan chart would get from one harbor to another by following all the anfractuosities of the coastline. This is like reading a book in the order specified by the table of contents. But when the coastline forms a gulf, the route between two points will be considerably shortened by venturing on the open sea, with the help of a map and a compass. Indexes function as the maps that indicate the coordinates of the targeted passage in the text (mostly page number, but conceivably also line number); while the sequential numbering of the pages function as the compass that enable readers to get there quickly, without leafing through all the preceding pages.

The problem of navigating a text becomes more complicated when the computer replaces the book as the material support of writing. Digital technology allowed the development of an alternative to both the random access and the linear print text. This alternative is the multilinear or "multi-cursal" text, and its principal manifestation is the electronically-based hypertext. Multilinear texts are broken into fragments ("lexia" or "textrons"[28]) and stored in a netwok whose nodes are connected by links—usually several per node. These links may be visibly marked (cf. the blue links of the World Wide Web) or remain hidden, to be discovered like easter eggs by the reader. Clicking on a link is like picking a route on a road map—except that the map may or may not be visible. The reader's navigation is neither entirely free, since he must follow the links designed by the author, nor entirely constrained, since the text offers a choice of routes.

Maps of textual space, like those of the textual world, can be either internal or external. Reader may try to draw sketches of the underlying net-

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[27] Brown (1949: 113).

[28] "Lexia" is George Landow's (1997) term; "textron" is used by Espen Aarseth (1997).

work to help themselves find their way through the labyrinth; or the map of the text may be available as part of the interface. An example of accessible interface map is the diagram figure 3. On this map, which was generated by the writing program Storyspace for *Izme Pass*[29], a collaborative hypertext by Carolyn Guyer and Martha Petry, the proximity of two nodes is determined by the number of arcs that link them, not by the physical distance between the two. Arcs are represented on the diagram in two-dimensional space, but they stand for something that has no spatial extension, since links consist of a "go to" instruction targeting a certain address in computer memory. This means that there is no analogical relation between the space of the diagram and the physical space occupied by the text in its storage device. A text mapped as a two-dimensional network exists in computer memory as a one-dimensional string of zeroes and ones[30]. Textual space, in the sense given by hypertext theorists[31] does not really exist at all: it is entirely a creation of the mapping algorithm.

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[29] Guyer/Petry (1991).
[30] Turing machines, which can compute anything computable, including hypertextual protocols, operate indeed on a long string, or tape, of binary data.
[31] Bolter (1991).

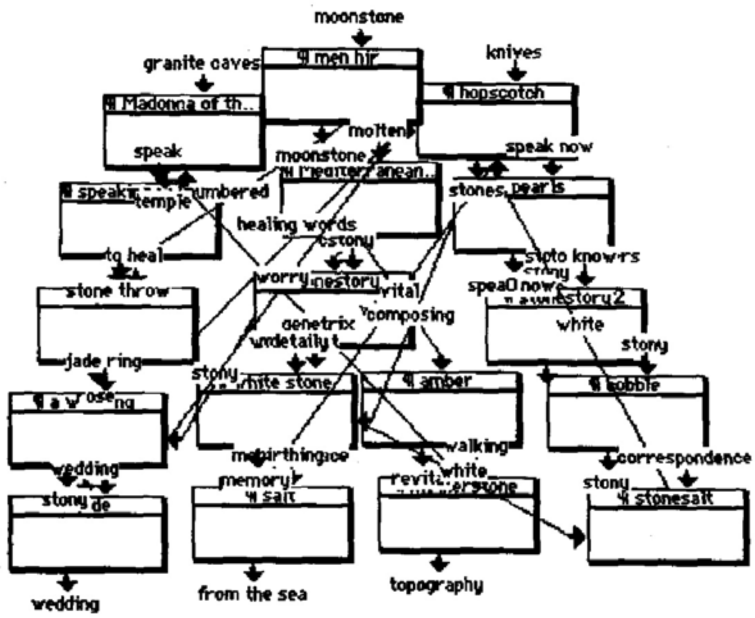



Figure 3: Storyspace map for *Izme Pass*. Reprinted by permission of Eastgate Systems

The map of *Izme Pass* functions both as a writing tool for the author and as an interface between text and reader. As a writing tool, its usefulness cannot be underestimated. It allows the author to manage an extensive system of lexia and to keep track of the system of links. As an interface its function is more problematic. Raine Koskimaa[32] has observed that many of the maps that are made available to hypertext readers have little navigational value. Since the map of the entire text is normally too large to fit on the screen, it can only be displayed one region at a time. This fragmentation does not enable the reader to move easily from any lexia to any other one. Moreover, the idea of targeting certain lexia on the basis of their label may be appropriate for information-seeking Web surfers, but it is alien to the spirit of reading for pleasure, a spirit that advocates free play, leisurely *flânerie*, serendipitous discovery and random movement through textual space rather than skimming the text with a nar-

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[32] Koskimaa (2003).

row goal in mind. What then is the point of making maps of textual space available to the reader? Let me sketch a few possible answers:

1. The map can be an aide, if not in reading, at least in re-reading the text. After the reader has completed a first survey of textual space, she may wish to return to certain favorite lexia.
2. The nodes and links on the map could change color after they have been activated, as do visited links on a Web site. This would spare the reader the frustration on running in circles in the textual labyrinth—an effect which, admittedly, some authors may be deliberately cultivating.
3. Looking at the map, even if it is not a useful navigational tool, may give the reader a sense of excitement similar to the euphoria a traveler may feel when contemplating from a high point the terrain of future explorations.
4. The spatial arrangement of the nodes may depict a symbolic figure which can only be apprehended by looking at the map. In *Izme Pass* for instance, as Barbara Page[33] has shown, the network is shaped like a heap of stones, or cairn, one of the major metaphors in the text for its role as a trail marker for those travelers who cross mountain passes on foot.

The abstract character of textual space does not mean that hypertext cannot use a concrete representation of the geographical space of the textual world. Consider figure 4, from Deena Larsen's *Marble Springs*[34], a hypertext which tells the story of a ghost town in Colorado. Here the reader navigates the textual network by navigating the map of the town or of the cemetery. If she clicks on a house on the city map, she gets a poem that relates to its female inhabitants; if she clicks on a gravestone on the cemetery map, she gets the inscription. Yet the concrete map of the textual world and the abstract map of textual space are not isomorphic. What happens here, simply, is that one of the nodes of the network has been filled with the geographic map of the textual world. On this map, each house, each grave holds a link, just as highlighted words do on textual screen. These links enable the reader to move back and forth between the geographic map and the texts connected to it. By functioning as the hub, the central node of the textual map, the geographic map offers to the reader a natural interface which gives a concrete purpose to her explora-

[33] Page (1999).
[34] Larsen (1993). The map comes from the internet demonstration version.

tion. Represented on the map through the cursor, whose movements stand for her own travel around Marble Springs, the reader is no longer cast as the external operator of a textual machine, but sees herself to some extent as an embodied member of the textual world.

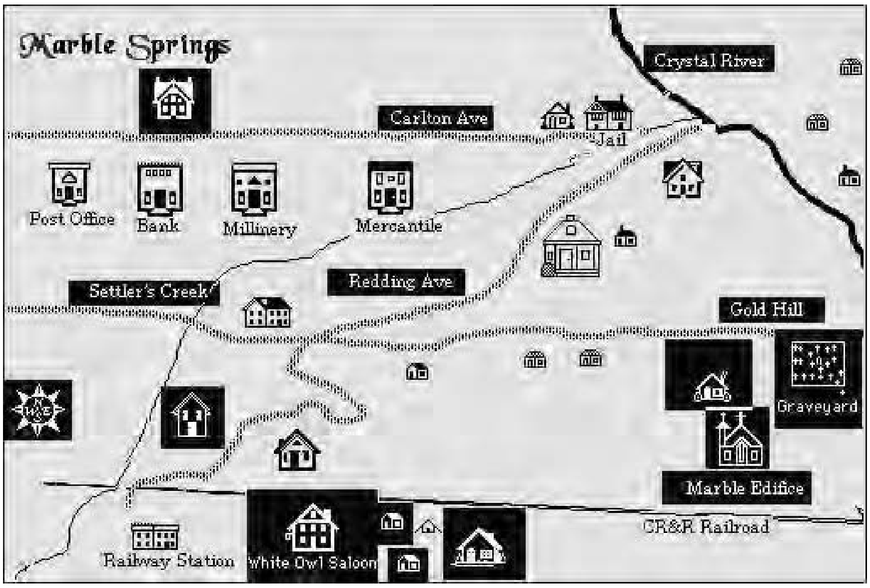



Figure 4: Map of the town of Marble Springs, drawn by Kathleen A. Turner-Suarez. From Deena Larsen's hypertext *Marble Springs*. Reprinted by permission of Eastgate Systems

## 4. Maps of spatial form

The notion of spatial form in literature was born out of dissatisfaction with Lessing's distinction between the temporal arts (music, literature) and the spatial arts (sculpture, painting)[35]. While the literary text reveals itself in time, it is mentally (re)construed as a spatial image. Though it is not literally true that mental images offer themselves all at once—some of their components are more easily accessed than others—the mind travels

35 Lessing (1984).

so efficiently through memory that the mental representation of the text may seem to be simultaneously present to consciousness in all its elements. Maps of spatial form capture the networks of relations that reveal themselves to the mind when it contemplates the text from a time-transcending, totalizing perspective. The spatial form approach was particularly popular among scholars of the structuralist school because of the movement's indebtness to Saussure's view of language as a system which must be described synchronically rather than diachronically. Through its arrangement of the themes of the text into a geometrical shape, Greimas' semiotic square[36] is a classical example of map of spatial form, even though its corners represent different moments in the narrative time-line. It may thus be seen as a spatialization of time.

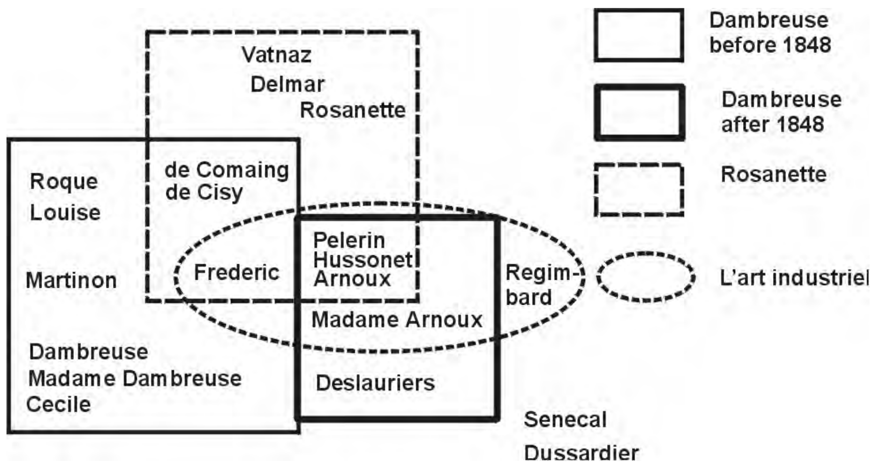



Figure 5: A map of spatial form: Franco Moretti's analysis of character relations in Flaubert's *L'éducation sentimentale* (Redrawn by the author)

Another common model for maps of spatial form is the Venn diagram, which is borrowed from set theory. Franco Moretti proposes for instance a diagram of social relations in Flaubert's *L'education sentimentale*[37] in which characters are grouped in different but overlapping sets, depending on who invites whom for dinner. (Figure 5 is my own redrawing of Moretti's diagram.) Characters situated at the intersection of several sets are

[36] Greimas (1976).
[37] Flaubert (1958).

the most socially mobile, since they frequent many circles of society. The hero, Frédéric Moreau, has access to all the sets but one: the circle centered around the woman he loves, Mme Arnoux. The novel tells the story of Frédéric's repeated, and always unsuccessful, efforts to conquer this forbidden territory, but the diagram shows no trace of these attempts, since it is limited to a synchronic apprehension. On Moretti's diagram the sets are presumably defined on the basis of the total number of dinner invitations that take place in the novel. Yet who gets invited where evolves during the time-span covered by the plot. The cartographer represents this evolution by redrawing the borders of one of the sets, the Dambreuse circle, to represent its state before and after 1848. This modest attempt to introduce a temporal dimension into a map of spatial form prefigures the topic of my next category.

## 5. Plot-maps

To the literary cartographer, no task is more daunting than the graphic representation of narrative action. This project involves two steps, both of which necessitate numerous decisions: the elaboration of a model of plot, and the transposition of this model into visual information. A plot is such a complex network of logico-semantic and formal features that plot-models can only capture partial representations; this is why so many different diagrams have been proposed by narratologists. There is no complete and definitive model of plot, only models that are more or less efficient at representing specific aspects of narrative structure. Once the narratological cartographer has decided what kind of information should go into the model, he faces a problem even more complex than the geographical task of projecting the three-dimensional, curved surface of the earth onto a flat surface of limited area. The mapping of a plot requires the projection of a four-dimensional space-time continuum onto a two-dimensional page; two dimensions must be sacrificed during the operation. Moreover, this page must be small enough to be readable: just as we have no use for a geographic map as big as the territory, as Jorge Luis Borges and Lewis Carroll have both wittily argued[38], we have no use for a plot-map that cannot fit on a sheet of paper. In addition to the problem of projection, the narratological cartogapher must consequently solve the

[38] In Borges (1998: 325) and in Carroll (1982: 727) respectively.

problem of reduction. This requires a highly selective representation of narrative information. The issue of the mapping of plots is so complex, and the approaches taken so diversified, that I can only present a quick overview of some of the options. I will for instance ignore the tree-shaped diagrams of story grammars, whose limitations I have discussed elsewhere[39].

### 5.1. A text-internal plot map

The overwhelming majority of plot-maps are extra-textual; but I will begin this survey with a literary curiosity : the intra-textual diagram of the plot of Laurence Sterne's novel *Tristram Shandy*, drawn by the narrator Tristram Shandy himself (reproduced in figure 6). Each diagram represents the narrative strategy of one of the volumes of the autobiography. The horizontal axis stands for the story to be told, namely the life of the narrator in its chronological order, while the vertical axis could represent the range of the topics available to the narrator's discourse—this is to say, "everything." (The drawing's proportions are distorted for the sake of integration in the text, for if the vertical axis represents whatever the narrator may wish to talk about, it should be infinite.) The deviations of the black line from the horizontal axis suggest the dance of discourse along the story-line. In order to keep up with the accumulation of events in the narrator's life discourse should stick to a straight line; every arabesque means that narration is falling behind. *Tristram Shandy* is indeed notorious for taking entire chapters to narrate a few moments in the narrator's life. But is there a systematic code underlying the capricious curves of the diagram, or is the exact shape of the line the result of the random play of the drawing hand? Commenting upon the fifth diagram, the narrator writes:

> By which it appears, that except of the curve, marked A. where I took a trip to *Navarre*,----and then the indented curve B. which is the short airing when I was there with the Lady *Baussiere* and her page,----I have not taken the least frisk of a digression, till *John de LaCasse*'s devils led me the round you see marked D.----for as for c c c c c they are nothing but parentheses, and the common ins and outs incident to the

[39] Ryan (1999), chapter 10.

> lives of the greatest ministers of state; and when compared with what men have done,-----or with my own transgressions of the letters A B D----they vanish into nothing[40].

The other four diagrams offer far worse offenses to the right line of "moral" (and narrative) rectitude than the curves of digressions. The forward and backward spikes could stand for flash forward and flash back, but what could the serpentines or the curves looping back upon themselves mean in terms of narrative strategies, besides a blatant mocking of

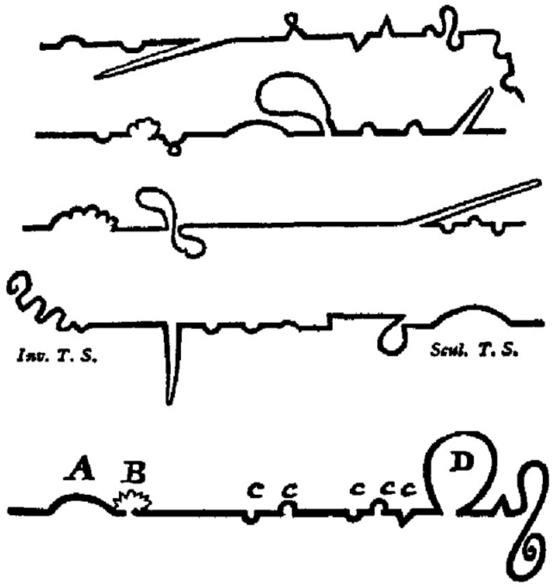



Figure 6: Plot-maps for *Tristam Shandy*

the plot line? The false contrition of the narrator (belied by his bragging about the enormity of his transgresssions) reinforces the sense that what matters in this text is not the story to be told but the verbal pyrotechnics of the storyteller. Narrating, for Sterne, is not moving a mirror along a road, as if was for Stendhal, but setting up fireworks along the way.

---

[40] Sterne (1980: 333–34).

## 5.2 Text-external plot maps

The simplest type of narrative map adopts the same approach as Sterne: it reduces plot to a line. The famous Freytag triangle represents for instance the rise and fall in tension that characterizes well-constructed dramatic plots. Here the horizontal axis stands for time, while the vertical axis measures the complexity of the situation (how "thick," or entangled the plot has become), as well as the spectator's emotional involvement. Insofar as it shows a contour of peaks and valleys, the plot-line of the Freytag triangle presupposes a spectator who looks at it from a horizontal point of




Figure 7: The itinerary of Don Quixote (Adapted from Franco Moretti, *Atlas of the European Novel, 1800-1900*)

view. But a linear representation of plot can also be done from a vertical perspective. The two dimensions of the page will then stand for the east-west and north-south extension of space, as they do in a geographical map, and the plot-line will represent the characters' movement in the fictional (or real) world. Figure 7 traces for instance the itinerary of Don Quixote's peregrination through Spain. The strength of vertical projections is their ability to show events that involve a continuous progression in space and time, but they can no more represent the particular episodes and the abrupt changes of state that punctuate this progression than a map of the itinerary of the Tour de France can give an idea of the drama of the race. This approach is therefore more efficient for the mapping of real-life

events, such as the progression of an army, or the spread of a fire, than for the representation of fictional plots with sudden turns of events.

A more versatile map can be obtained by privileging temporal sequence over spatial representation. An example of this approach is the

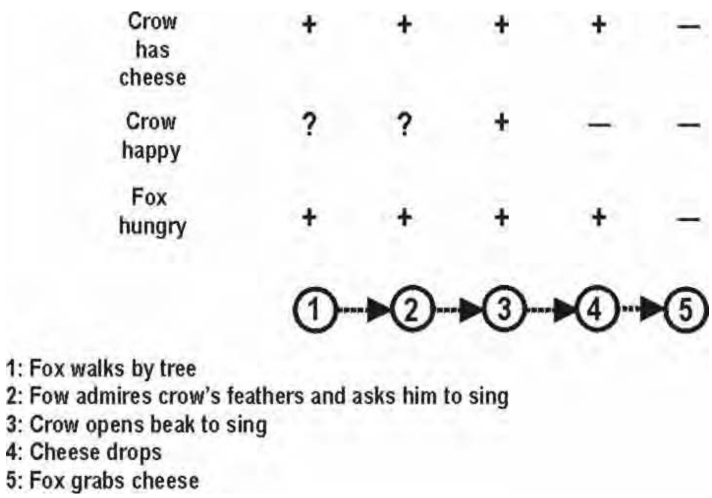



Figure 8: Plot-map as state-transition diagram ("The Fox and the Crow")

state-transition diagram (figure 8). Here the horizontal axis stands for time, but the vertical axis does not stand for any particular narrative dimension. Its only function is to provide room for the visual expansion and the legends of the symbols. Since this type of diagram is unable to represent simultaneous action and parallel plot lines, it is only useful for the simplest stories.

The diagram of figure 9 takes care of this limitation by devoting one axis to time, and another to space. Circles represent events, and the lines that run into each circle show which characters participate in the events.

This type of diagram is good for representing parallel plot lines and the convergence of destinies. To convey more information, the vertical axis could be divided into distinct zones, which would stand for strategic locations: zone a is the wilderness, zone b is the heroine's house, zone c is her lover's mansion, and so on. The diagram would thus be able to tell who is where, and who is together at every temporal juncture. But since it reduces space to a collection of discrete locations, it does not map movement adequately. Nor can it represent relations of proximity between the various strategic locations.

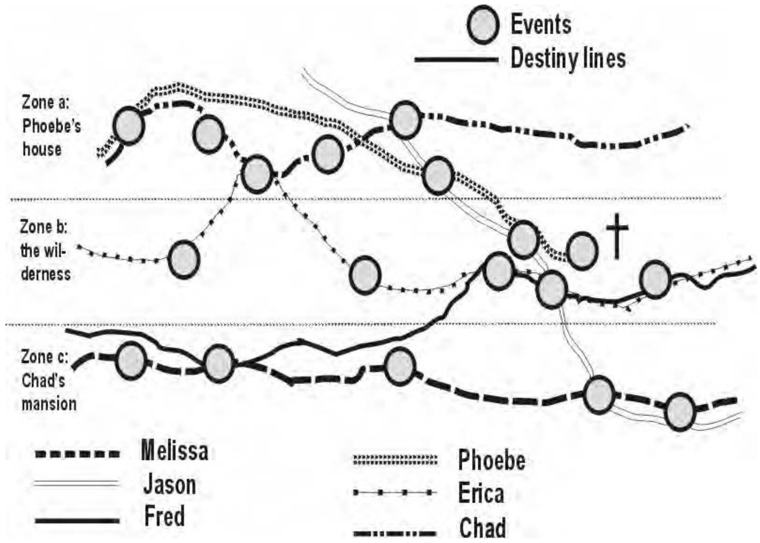



Figure 9: Plot-map showing connections between destiny lines

Rather than representing physical space, the second axis could be devoted to the mapping of mental space. This is what I tried to do on the plot-map[41] of "The Fox and the Crow" shown in figure 10. The diagram is rotated compared to the preceding ones, since time is represented on the vertical axis. The columns on the left and right display the content of the various domains of the mental world of characters: their knowledge, beliefs, goals and plans. The central column shows the chronological succession of physical states and events; the line between events stands for temporal succession; the letters that label transitions between events stand for relations of material causality; the arrows from events to character domains stand for mental reactions, and the arrows from character domains back to physical events stand for psychological motivation, or intentionality. In designing this diagram however I quickly hit upon the limitations of my working space. A narrative with more than two characters would require several columns on the left and right, or several different planes. This would lead to an unreadable thicket of tangled lines.

[41] Adapted from Ryan (1991).

To complicate matters, mental space is recursive; the beliefs of each character include a representation of the beliefs and plans of the others. Insofar as it is successfully executed, the plan of the fox corresponds to the events shown in the box on the graph. But the plan of the crow remains unactualized because it is based on a wrongful interpretation of the fox's intent. The crow's representation of the foxe's beliefs and plan, as well as his own plan had to be represented on separate graphs, not shown on figure 10. This type of mapping contains so much information that it becomes very difficult to read for humans. I meant it as a way to represent plots in computer memory, so that the computer would be able to answer questions about the internal logic of the story.

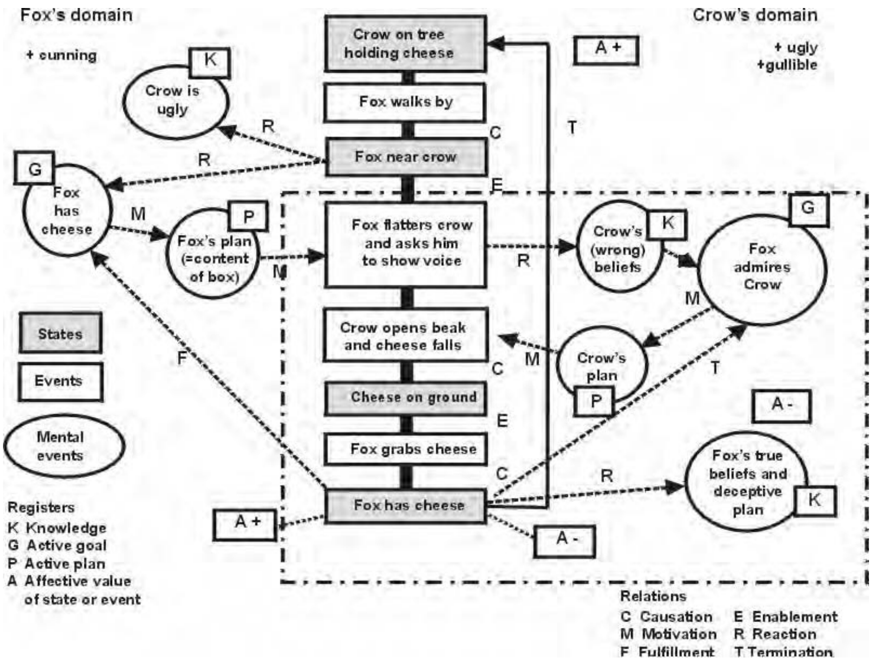



Figure 10: Plot-map showing connections between mental spaces and external states and events ("The Fox and the Crow")

Computers can handle more complex graphs than humans, but they can also improve the readability of graphs. Thank to the multidimensionality and interactive nature of the digital medium, I believe that it is now possible to develop plot diagrams that will be both user-friendly

and reasonably detailed. The physical events could for instance be represented as a linear sequence in a window on the screen. Each event would show the names of the participants. By clicking on these names, the reader would open another window, which would show the content of the mind of characters before and after any action. Further clicks would lead to the character's representation of other character's beliefs. The various moments in the plot could be connected to geographic maps, which would show the current location of characters in the textual world. Through yet another click, these maps could be animated, showing character movements. The interlinking of all these maps would produce an analytical simulation of the global evolution of the textual world.

The moral of this survey of narrative mapping is that the semantics of plot are too complex for two-dimensional diagrams. The more we represent, the less readable the map becomes. As Jorge Luis Borges argues in his famous essay "On Exactitude in Science,"[42] if a map showed everything, it would need to be as large as the territory. With narrative meaning the problem is even more acute than with geography, since the interpretation of texts involves far more information than the sum of the individual meanings of their component sentences. The perfect narrative map, if there could be such a thing, would be many times larger than the textual territory.

## 6. The text itself as map

To conclude this essay I would like to discuss the odd case of a text that aspires to look like a map, maybe even to become one. This text is an artist's book by Tom Phillips titled *A Humument* and subtitled *A Treated Victorian Novel*[43]. The work was produced by taking a randomly chosen nineteenth century novel, *A Human Document*, and by covering its pages with paint, leaving some words of the original text exposed. Just as the title of Tom Phillips's work contracts the original title into a new one, the words that remain visible condense the original narrative into a text, or into a series of textual fragments, that tell an entirely different story (if indeed they tell a consistent story at all—I'm taking the phrase in its idiomatic meaning). The landscape of typographical islands (or rather

[42] Borges (1998).
[43] Phillips (1997).

lakes, to remain topographically consistent) connected by rivers of blank space traces an itinerary across the page that tells the reader in which order the exposed words should be read.

Figure 11 is my redrawing of an image which illustrates the same formula. Profiled against a background that looks like a peninsula, the exposed text forms a love poem of sorts: “Striking a love match, lovers Step silent dream, dream dreams like these.” A second river leading to an empty lake lets the reader fill the dream with whatever she wishes. The map-like background of this particular page proposes an allegory of the functioning of the whole text. Though not every page looks like an aerial view of land, every page guides the reader through the text by means of the same navigational strategy: following a route marked in white on the page.

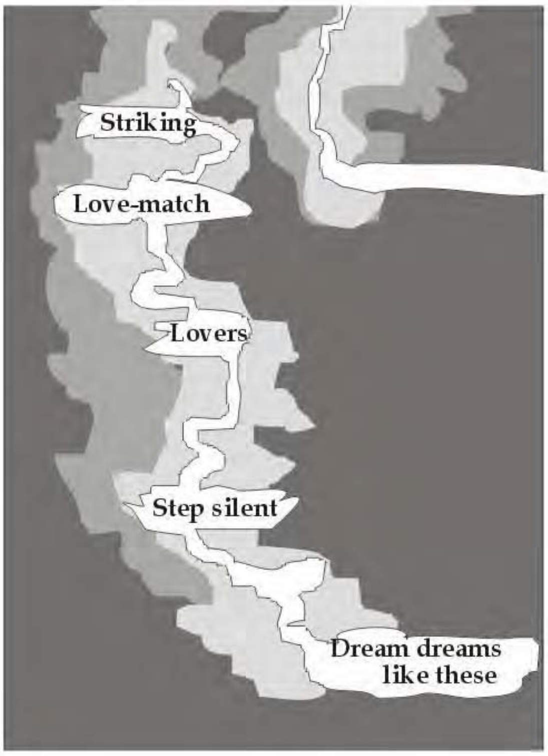



Figure 11: The text as map: Tom Phillips, *A Humument*
(Redrawn by the author)

Tom Phillips regards the work as a literalization of the deconstructionist idea that language, or the literary text, never controls meaning, because every utterance and every text hides a subtext which subverts what it is trying to say. Through the paint that *covers* the Victorian novel, the map-like designs of *A Humument* paradoxically *un*cover a path through the thickness of the subtext. As the reader studies the map, the words along the path emerge as a text in their own right, and it is the Victorian novel, the once text, that retreats into the background and becomes a subtext.

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